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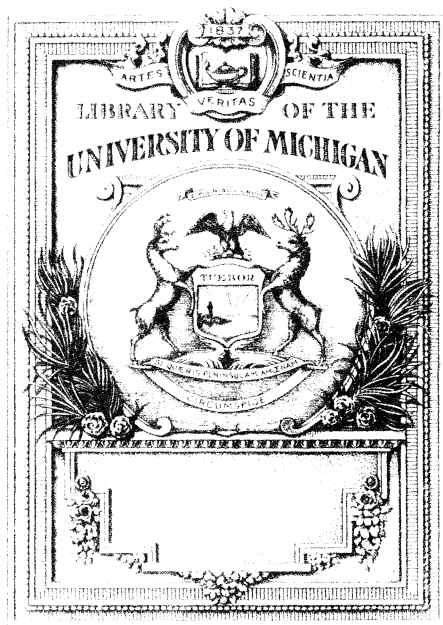
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FOR MEN AND WOMEN

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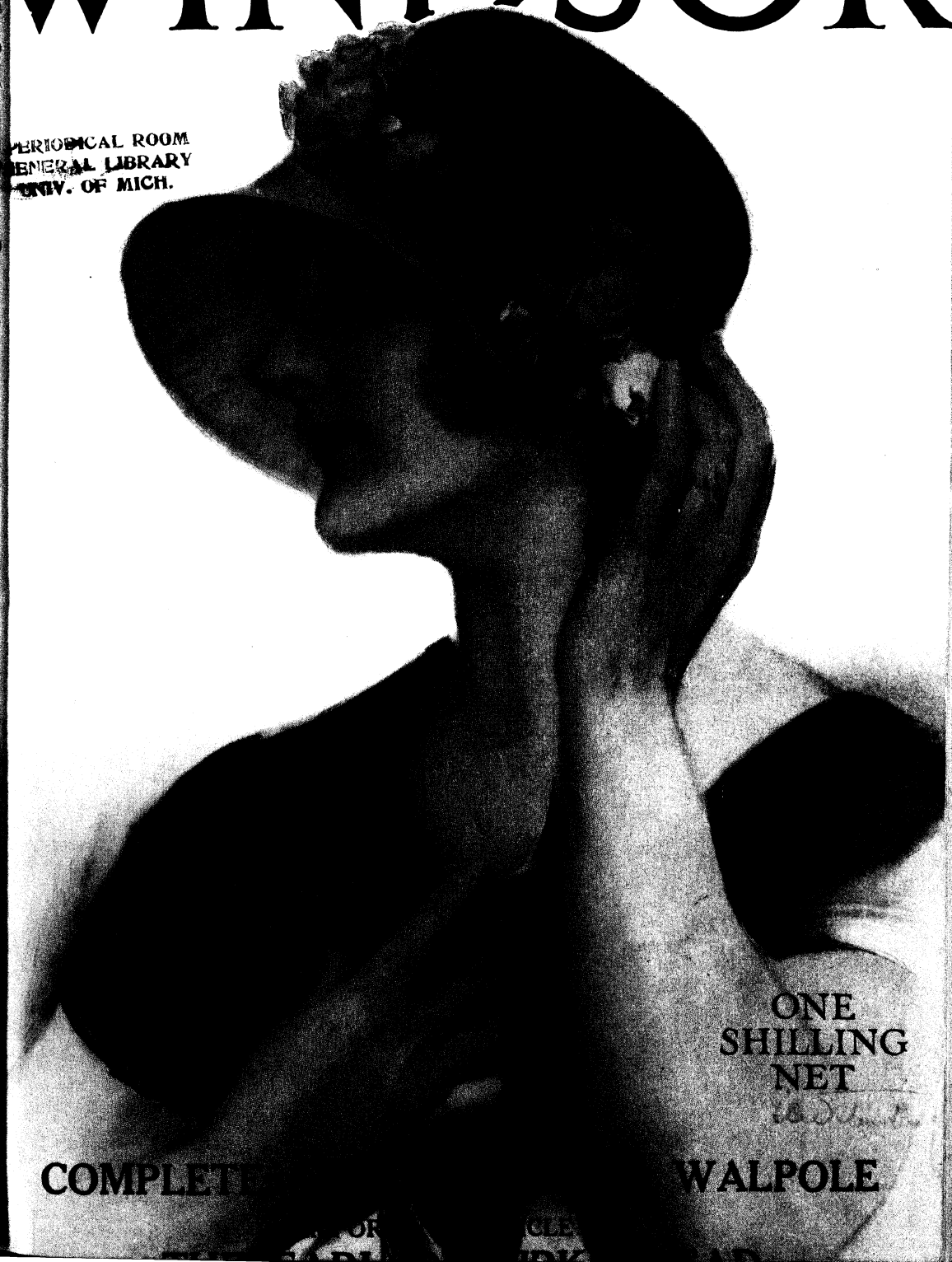
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# THE JUNE WINDSOR

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COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF GEORGE III BY HENRY WALPOLE



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A WOODLAND PATH.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY BY CECIL B. WATERLOW.



"‘We shall not take more than eight things,’ I said firmly.”

# THE ADVENTURE OF THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS

By HUGH WALPOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

**A**MONG the many episodes with which during this year I was concerned, this is, perhaps, the only shameful one. When I say shameful, I mean that I have still, looking back, scruples of conscience about it. From the æsthetic point of view these scruples are unjustified; from the moral—well, I don't know. You shall judge for yourself. The case centres round Mrs. Hartington, who was a very remarkable woman. Her real name, of course, was not Hartington, but it is only her death, some six months ago, that enables me to tell this story. Even now

her friends may perhaps recognise this account of her, and if they don't recognise her, they will possibly recognise her still more remarkable husband.

Charles Hartington died in the autumn of 1923. He had some business of some sort—what it was does not matter. He was never, I should fancy, very wealthy, but he had a passion for collecting beautiful things, and, with his exquisite taste, his very great knowledge, and the freedom that his business allowed him for travel, he managed to gather things around him as every man can manage if he really cares

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enough and has sufficient leisure. Cares! Charles Hartington did not, I suppose, care for anything else except his beautiful things. I saw him only once, when he was showing an aunt of mine over his house in Evelyn Gardens. I was with her. The things that he showed us were so lovely that I paid very little attention, I am afraid, to himself; but that is as he would have had it. He was like the voice of his possessions, and you felt that if they were not there he would not be there either. This question of the living and breathing vitality of concrete objects is acknowledged by some people and entirely denied by others; you either feel it or you don't. It is one of the really great divisions between people, and the exact essence of this division has never been better put, I imagine, than by Henry James in his exquisite "Spoils of Poynton." I must ever apologise to that great man for this little ghost of his magnificent art.

Hartington was not a collector of any especial kind or period; if a thing was beautiful enough, and he could afford it, he got it. And yet the house in Evelyn Gardens in no way resembled a museum. The true drawback, I take it, to any museum is that the things therein do not really belong to anybody. They feel themselves that lack, and I am entirely in sympathy with De Goncourt when he said that he would leave his wonderful collection to the auctioneer's hammer to be broken up and scattered once again among private individuals rather than to the cold, indifferent chastity of a vast impersonal building. On that day when I visited Hartington with my aunt I remember that he picked up a Tang horse with a deep blue saddle and held it, stroking its gleaming patina very much as my aunt herself would cherish her trembling Pekinese. He was, I think, a long, thin man with a ragged grey moustache and a stammer. I had the impression, I remember, that he wanted us to be gone; my aunt, of course, said all the wrong things.

Mrs. Hartington I came to know rather well because I was a friend of her son David. David was, at the time of his father's death, about thirty years of age, a long, thin, shy man, very inarticulate, hiding deeply his feelings.

I had not become his friend until, one day a few weeks after his father's death, meeting me somewhere, he took me aside and begged to speak to me. "I want your

advice," he began shyly, but with great earnestness.

"Rather," I answered, "if there is anything I can do?"

"It's like this," he went on. "You know my father died some weeks ago. He left everything to my mother."

"Yes," I said. It seemed such an unlikely thing for him to have done.

"He made a will on the day he married her, and never another afterwards."

He hesitated and then came out with it. I found to my surprise that he loved his father's things passionately, had always loved them since he was a child. He wasn't, he explained to me, in any sense a collector, didn't want to acquire more things. He didn't care for these things for their monetary value, nor for their rarity, simply for themselves. He had had them round him since he was a baby; he had come, he explained to me, to feel about them personally, so personally that he didn't want any other friends—he didn't think that he would ever find any other friends half so good. He told me this nervously, obviously expecting that I would think him an awful fool; but when he saw that I did not, he sighed with relief; he perceived that I had something of the same sort of feeling myself. He then went on to explain his mother to me. This was difficult for him, because he wanted to be loyal to her, had a deep affection for her, and understood her point of view much better probably than she did herself. The point was that she had never cared for her husband's possessions, not only not cared, but had been continually exasperated and irritated by them. I understood that this question had been, from the very beginning of their married life, the one great division between them. Mrs. Hartington must, when she was a girl, have been very beautiful, and I imagine that Hartington had added her to his collection with a great deal of æsthetic enjoyment; but Mrs. Hartington had, of course, been broadened and thickened and hardened by daily living, and as her spirit had never been æsthetic—far from it, indeed—there was soon nothing left in her to respond to Hartington's kind of beauty. That is, of course, the great advantage that beautiful things have over beautiful people. I don't imagine that Hartington ever cared greatly for moral qualities or splendid principles.

The point now was that Mrs. Hartington intended to sell everything. She was going

to move into a flat, and would retain only the quite essential furniture. The discovery of this intention had come to David with a shock of the completest surprise. He had never dreamt for a moment that there would ever be a time when these things would not be with him and he with them. He told me that the morning, after breakfast, when his mother had told him quite casually that everything would be sold, had been the most frightful morning of his life. He had made, he was afraid, an awful scene. He had taken his mother, of course, by complete surprise, she never having known him make a scene before; they had always been the best of friends. I suppose that all through her married life subconsciously she had been looking forward to the time when she would be able to sell everything. She was not a cruel woman nor a revengeful—she had cared for her husband in a pitying, maternal sort of fashion—but she had looked on his purchases as desperate extravagances, justified only by their becoming one day excellent investments. It must have seemed to her a kind of insanity that a grown man should go all the way to Pekin, neglecting his proper business, to buy a blue plate, and now, to her amazement, here was her only child giving an exhibition of the same sort of insanity. I imagine that even though she had not before been determined to sell everything, now, after this hysterical exhibition of her son's, she was absolutely resolved.

What it came to, after further talk, was that I should take luncheon with Mrs. Hartington and see whether I could make any impression upon her. It was rather pathetic, this idea of David's that I should be able to make an impression. His belief was, poor dear, that anyone would be able to make a better impression than he. He had great confidence in me. I had on this occasion very little in myself. However, the matter was arranged. Mrs. Hartington would be very glad to see any friend of David's and show him her husband's things. Part of her message to me was that I had better hurry up, because they wouldn't be there to show very much longer.

As I stood rather nervously waiting in the drawing-room of the house in Evelyn Gardens, I realised that everything was the same as it ever had been, everything had a permanent look about it, and you needed, I reflected, a great deal of ruthless determination and a complete absence of sensitive imagination to dare to uproot this per-

fectly adjusted beauty. But when Mrs. Hartington came in I saw that she was exactly the woman to effect these changes. She was an exceedingly English type. America produces determined women, but they are determined for certain very definite purposes; they have their work to do in the world and know it. But Mrs. Hartington was determined and resolute simply because she was Mrs. Hartington; it had never occurred to her that she should not have her way about everything, nor that her way would be anything but the absolutely right one. In physical appearance she was square, ruddy-faced, with eyes that were good-natured, but that never questioned anything. I suspect that she had never shown surprise nor remorse nor apprehension nor desire; it was impossible to conceive her in love. She was not so much a woman as a fact. She would be honest and honourable, and would be one of those persons who would tell you just what they thought of you, and then be sure that they had done you a service. She would be excellent on committees, and would have clear views about everything. If she knew aches and pains, she would never say so. If you were in trouble, she would be an excellent person to go to for advice, but you would never dream of going to her.

She greeted me with kindly patronage. I was David's young friend, she was David's mother, and so she would be kind to me, but without considering me at all. I was to her, I fancy, something like a very easy problem in algebra. I found it difficult at first to think about her at all because of the things in the room. I have, as I have already said, been terribly susceptible to beauty; I say terribly because if you care very much you will be for ever wanting more than you can get, not possessively wanting, of course, but imaginatively. There were so many lovely things in the room that I was bewildered. The Tang horse with the blue saddle on the mantelpiece, the small Constable study for his picture "A Summer Afternoon After a Shower," an exquisite jewelled crucifix, two Rembrandt etchings, the "De Jonghe" and "The Artist Sitting at a Window Drawing"—these were some of the things that I especially noticed. The room must sound to you something of a jumble, but the extraordinary thing was that there was no confusion at all. Hartington had obviously studied deeply the exact position of everything in the room, and in some way had transmuted them all into a



general pattern of colour and symmetry. When we went into the dining-room to luncheon, I began to feel, against my will, a hostility to the good lady. I have always

maid had brushed me aside with the crumbs she would have scarcely realised that I was gone. She asked me questions about myself in that kindly and indifferent manner that



"Her eyes rested on the two Rembrandts."

felt envious of those lucky people who are so insensitive to personality that they can pursue their purpose without prejudice. I suppose it was my conceit that irritated me with Mrs. Hartington. I was so inconsiderable to her that if the pretty servant

charitable ladies use when they are visiting the neglected poor—where had I been to school, and had I been to Cambridge or Oxford. She supposed I played games, like most English young men. It was such a pity that David didn't play games better; she

believed in young men playing games. Had I got a father, mother, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts? Where did I live, and didn't I find the English winter absurdly long?

meal, most foolishly burst into an ecstasy about the lovely things on every side of us. It was the worst move I could have made, but I expect that that was one of Mrs. Hartington's attributes; she was for ever forcing people into absurd situations because she was herself so calm and so indifferent. From the moment of my enthusiasm I was lost as far as she was concerned.

"I am glad you like them," she said; "they have been, of course, very greatly admired. For myself, I don't understand this passion for collecting. It gave my husband pleasure, and so



"We waited for our doom."

I answered all these things as well as I could, and then, towards the end of the

I acquiesced in it, but what I say is that there are plenty of museums, there are

better things, you know, to spend one's money on." She was so sure of this that I was bound to contradict her.

"I don't agree," I burst out, cursing myself at the same time subconsciously. "There is nothing I envy anybody so much as being able to have such things near them. A museum is such a cold place. Why, that Forain would be nothing in a museum; there would be fifty others as good, and thousands of other wonderful etchings as well, but here, all by itself, it knows that you care for it, and it responds and is grateful."

At least after this I had forced her to consider me. She looked at me with the gravest suspicion. "I do hope you haven't been telling my son these things," she said. "I am going to sell everything."

"You're going to sell everything!" I exclaimed. "Oh, Mrs. Hartington, how can you? Of course I agree that it's better to sell them than to send them to a museum; but they belong here—you'll miss them yourself terribly after they're gone."

I had cooked my goose with a vengeance. She took me over the house with a speed that showed that she wanted to get rid of me as soon as possible. There was a room upstairs, with some Corots, a Daubigny, and a Sisley, that seemed to me the most perfect place of rest that I had ever seen. The walls were a very faint primrose, the curtains some soft silver grey, there was a little cabinet holding some pale blue porcelain, and the Daubigny had in it a wood and a stream of such perfect peace and contentment that I could have gazed at it for ever. I was allowed the merest glimpse; it seemed to me that the room sighed behind me as I left it.

In the hall, as she said good-bye to me, these were her parting words: "Please don't encourage David in his extravagant ideas; now that his father is gone, he must realise facts." She said "facts" as though she were slamming the door to on all the exquisite things that life contains. She was wearing, I remember, a dress of dark green that encased her square hard figure like a sheet of armour. I am sorry to say that I had a strong mad impulse to pinch her and see whether she would scream. How relieved I was when I found myself in the street without having created a scandal! I had been a complete failure, but now I was resolved, as I had never been resolved about anything before, that the matter should not end here.

My next conversation with David was

distressing; he had had such great confidence in my success. "But why should I have succeeded?" I asked him. "I had never seen your mother before. There was no reason why I should influence her; she had the greatest contempt for me from the first moment she saw me."

"Not contempt," said David quietly; "she isn't contemptuous—she's indifferent."

"Those are the hardest people to influence," I said. "You may as well make your mind up to it. So far as I am concerned, I shall only influence her the wrong way."

We sat staring at one another blankly; then, in his gentle, hesitating voice, he came out with his awful proposal. "We shall have to steal the things," he said.

You can imagine my surprise and almost consternation. There are some people from whom one expects desperate suggestions, and there are others who we know have no moral principle at all, and for these people, let us deny it as we may, if we like them we often shift our own moral code. If anyone had ever told me that David Hartington would one day calmly suggest that he should rob his own mother, I would, of course, have given him the lie.

"I know it sounds bad," David went on, not at all apologetically, "but I can't help that. Mother's got heaps of money. If she loses some of these things, she won't financially feel the difference—in fact," he continued excitedly, "I don't think she will even realise that they're gone, and that's the test. If we take them away, and she looks round and doesn't know they're not there, it will mean that they've meant so little to her that she's got absolutely no right to dispose of them. That's an immoral theory, but aesthetically it's just. If someone has a beautiful thing, and doesn't even know he has it, then he's got no right to it whatever."

"Don't be so foolish," I answered him. "You mean to tell me that if you took that Tang horse away from the mantelpiece she wouldn't miss it? Of course she would."

"That's my belief," he answered. "I know my mother better than you do. She's astoundingly blind about some things. She never would listen to my father when, in the old days, he tried to tell her about his acquisitions—she made a point of not listening. The Tang horse doesn't mean more to her than a soup tureen, and not so much; she's never looked at the thing

individually at all. She never looks at anything unless it's so bright in colour that she simply can't escape it. That's the test—that's the test. Of course we won't take everything—we couldn't if we wanted to—only a few of the most beautiful things."

I stared at him in amazement, he said it so calmly. "You," I cried, "you to talk like this! And why *we*? You can commit your own burglaries."

"All right," he answered. "It is my affair; you shan't be dragged into it if you don't want to be."

And then, most perversely, I did want to be, simply, I think, because I had had luncheon with Mrs. Hartington. I wanted to pay her back a little of her indifferent patronage. "Well, I'll see," I answered cautiously. "Tell me your plan."

"I shan't tell you my plan," he said, "unless you agree to come in with me. It's much better you should know nothing about it unless you're going to share in it."

"I'll help you," I agreed. "I am ready to go to prison for those things."

He was greatly relieved. "That's fine," he answered. "The thing's quite simple. We will go one day when she's away in the country, have a car outside, put the things into it, and go off with them. More than that, I shall put the things up in my flat, ask her to tea, let her look round and take it all in, and if then she doesn't say anything, I am justified completely."

"It's impossible she shouldn't notice," I answered.

"You don't know my mother," he told me.

I was, after this, strangely haunted by some of these possessions—the Tang horse, the blue plate, the jewelled crucifix, the Daubigny, were present to me as though I had them in my own room. You may say that these things had no life. I say that they had, and am convinced that the Tang horse was fully aware that its future was at stake. You know how a dog, when his master is going away, will be conscious of this for days beforehand; so was the Tang horse conscious, and I am sure that he hated Mrs. Hartington with a deadly hatred. On the day of our adventure—a Saturday—there was a fog, one of those especial London fogs that are never still, but creep up and down the town like an invading army. It collects all its forces in one especial spot, has great fun there, choking everything and everybody, bewil-

dering the unimaginative, exciting the romantic, aggravating the practical, delaying the amorous, throttling the avaricious, and then, when it has had its fun, moving on, with a throaty chuckle, somewhere else and beginning its games all over again.

It was not very thick when we arrived outside Evelyn Gardens. The houses there stood out of it as though they were surrounded by water; spirals and whorls of yellow mist played about the walls. Here there was a shining knocker, there a pair of nice clean steps; here three peering windows, there a crooked chimney. Only a little way there was blackness, with shouts and lighted flares and discordant hootings. The nice little maid, Elsie, opened the door for us, and of course showed no surprise at David's presence. Mrs. Hartington had gone for the week-end. At first she had thought she would not go, the fog was so bad, but at last she had made up her mind. She would be back on Monday for luncheon.

"That's right, Elsie," David said kindly. "We shan't want you any more. I have got something to do for my mother."

We went into the drawing-room, dim with a sort of grey mist, turned on the electric light, and considered things. There was no hurry—we had two days if we pleased. David had been quite clear as to what he wanted, but now, when he faced the room, he was not so sure. Everything pleaded to be taken—of that there could be no possible doubt; it was as though they had all crowded around us and besought us. Only the Tang horse was quiet and composed, because he knew that he would not be left.

"Well, then," said David, looking about him, "there's the horse and those plates, the Constable, the two Rembrandts, the Forain upstairs, the amber box, the Georgian sugar castor, the porphyry bowl——"

"The Daubigny," I interrupted.

"Yes, the Daubigny, the crucifix——" And he went on enumerating one thing after another until I called on him to stop.

"This is absurd," I said. "We can't take more than a dozen things at the most. Your mother may be blind, but if the whole house was stripped she must notice something."

"Well, then," he began again, "there's the Tang horse, the Daubigny, the two Rembrandt etchings, those two plates——" And so he went on with a list as large as the first one.

"We shall not take more than eight things," I said firmly. "If you won't agree, I'll leave the house instantly, and will have nothing more to do with it."

He saw reluctantly the justice of this, and we spent then a most pathetic half-hour, taking things up, putting them down, stroking them, holding them under the light from every possible angle, sighing and exulting and sighing again. At last, however, we got to work. We chose the Tang horse, the two Rembrandts, the two plates, the Daubigny, the Constable and the jewelled crucifix. Fortunately these things left no very striking spaces. The pictures hung from a cornice, and a very little shifting of other pictures filled the empty spaces. We put a Chinese camel in the place of the horse, and a lovely dark red bowl where the plates had been. The real trouble then began. About the Forain—he *must* take it, he loved it better than anything there. It was the exquisite "Return of the Prodigal Son," and if anything was ever vocal in its appeal to be considered, that was. But I was firm. No more than eight, I said. I knew that if this was admitted, there would be trouble about something else—we should be there all day. "I'll leave the crucifix and take the Forain," he said. And then he looked at the beautiful ivory Christ, so pale and gentle and appealing. He shook his head. "No, I must have the crucifix. It's been there ever since I was a kid; it belongs to me more than anything else in the house."

Meanwhile I had wrapped up the pictures and etchings and put them in the car. I was holding the Tang horse in my arms, and just about to wrap it up, when the door opened and we heard a voice: "David, you here! I have been at that station a whole hour. There's no hope of the train. It's too provoking! How do you do?"—rather stiffly to me. My heart hammered. I had mechanically put the horse back on the mantelpiece, where it stood rather indignantly beside the camel, and then gazed like a fool, with my mouth open.

David, however, was marvellous; he rose to the situation as though he had never known any other. "So sorry about the train, mother," he said; "it is bad luck. But you'll have a nice quiet Sunday, with no engagements with tiresome people whom you don't really want to see."

"That's all very well," she answered impatiently, looking about her. "How foggy this room is! It seems to get in

everywhere. Where's Elsie? I must have something to eat. You've had your lunch, I suppose?"

"Yes, mother," said David calmly, "we have. We're just off."

She looked about her, and, as it seemed to me, most penetratingly; it was the fog that disturbed her. She walked up and down, indignant that anything should dare to interfere with her well-arranged plans. My heart seemed to stop beating; she actually went up to the mantelpiece and in an absent-minded way laid her hand on the camel. Then she walked off again and, to my horror, stared straight at the place where the two Rembrandts ought to be. "This fog makes everything so filthy," she said. "I can't imagine why they haven't discovered something to stop it. How stupid people are!"

There was worse to follow. She turned towards us with that determined jerk of her head that I was already beginning to know so well. "I know what I'll do," she said. "I suppose that's your car I saw standing outside. If you're going off now, you shall take me as far as the Women's Constitutional; I'll have something to eat there."

Even now David didn't lose his head. "All right, mother," he said. "You'd better speak to Elsie about your being here over the week-end, then come along with us."

"Yes, I will," she answered, and moved out of the room.

He turned to me. "We haven't a moment to lose. You take the horse; I've got the plates." In another moment we had everything in the back of the car, had covered up the parcels with a rug, and I sat firmly beside them. "She'll have to sit in front with me," he said grimly, "otherwise I'll strangle her!"—a most regrettable thing for a son to say about his mother. So we sat in the car waiting, the fog whirling about us, driven by a cold and biting wind, and behaving exactly as though it knew what we were doing, and was malignantly delighted with our wickedness. Mrs. Hartington came out. She made as though she were going to get into the back of the car.

"No, mother," said David, "you sit in front with me; it'll be warmer for you."

Here I think her dislike of me assisted us; she would rather not sit with me if she could help it, and she planted herself in her solid, determined, ruthless fashion beside her son.

Once she looked back. "Have you been

shopping?" she asked. "What are all those things under the rug?"

"Yes, I've been shopping," David answered. "Please don't talk, mother, if you don't mind; this fog makes driving so difficult."

We did indeed have a most helter-skelter journey, and took a long time to reach the Women's Constitutional. When she had at last disappeared behind those gloomy portals, I could have cried with relief.

"You see, I was right," he said excitedly, as we drove towards his flat; "she didn't notice a thing."

"You didn't give her much chance," I replied. "The test will be when you've got them up in your flat."

As we approached the final climax, my excitement became terrific. There seemed to me to be very much more in this than Mrs. Hartington's anger or David's disappointment. It was a test for the whole of humanity. Could it really be that there were people in the world, healthy, normal, intelligent people, who cared so little for beautiful things that they simply did not see them when they were right in front of their noses? I had myself known something of this. I was in my own way a small collector—some etchings and prints, a few rare books, some bronzes—and I had realised what every collector realises, the disappointment when some friend who appears to regard life very much as you do sees nothing at all in something that stirs the very depths of your being. "Well, I do think that's pretty," a lady had once said of my Meryon "Morgue," a rather poor impression, because, of course, I couldn't afford a good one. The Meryon "Morgue" pretty! It certainly takes all sorts to make a world.

But here would be the supreme unquestionable test. Here were some of the most beautiful things in the world, things she had known all her life; we surely could not escape.

As you may imagine, we had an exciting time arranging them in David's flat. The flat was small, but the sitting-room was a nice, square chamber with a high ceiling. What he had in it was good, but not so good, of course, as these new possessions.

"If you put the Tang horse on the mantelpiece," I said, "you're simply asking for it; it's impossible that she should not notice it."

But he was determined; his conscience would not be appeased unless he set himself

the uttermost test. The Daubigny was in his bedroom, the jewelled crucifix on his writing-table, the blue plates in his dining-room. Then he asked his mother to lunch, and asked me, too.

"Oh, I'm not coming," I answered. "For one thing, I couldn't bear the suspense; for another, if there is a row, it would be so awkward, my being there."

"Of course you've got to come," he answered irritably; the strain was getting on his nerves. "The very fact that she doesn't like you will take her attention off the room. You can't desert me now." And I couldn't; my curiosity was too strong.

The fatal day was beautiful, spring-like, warm and full of sun; everything showed up as clearly as could be. I couldn't believe but that in the first minute she would exclaim at the Tang horse. She stood there looking about her; she obviously had something on her mind. She looked around, her eyes lighting first here, then there. She went up to the mantelpiece, stared straight at the horse, gazed and gazed at it. Well, now, of course, we were done. I know that David thought so; I could see it in his eyes. Well, what of it? He was, after all, her own son. She could not put him into gaol; she could only indignantly have the things sent back again, and sell them immediately. It would mean ignominy for me and bitter disappointment for him—indeed, I saw that it could in a way ruin his whole life. He would always be longing for these things; they would persistently destroy, by their absence, his pleasure in any other of his possessions. He would never be able to afford to buy them back; he was, in a way, a ruined man.

She turned round; we waited for our doom. Her eyes rested on the two Rembrandts. "David," she said, her voice passionately determined, "I want another word of five letters for mantelpiece; you must help me."

"You want what?" David gasped.

"Another word of five letters for mantelpiece. I have nearly done the thing. I have been at it all the morning. Now, just think." She produced a crossword puzzle, cut from an evening paper, out of her little bag. "You see," she explained, "table's all right, and it must be 'Sahara,' but 41 down beats me altogether."

He threw at me a look of triumph. "All right, mother, we'll see what we can do." His man murmured something at the door; we all went in to luncheon.

# THE MAKING OF A STATESMAN

By THE RIGHT HON.  
THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, P.C.

**R**ELEASED from cares of State for a few hours of leisure, I remain attentive, none the less, to those Westminster chimes that are always audible to the absent; and so, for more reasons than I need recount, there is some appropriateness in the fact that I have been desired to consider in this place the evolution of a statesman. Incidentally, too, as one long privileged to serve the House of Windsor, I appreciate that a decided partiality in favour of established institutions will come naturally to readers of "The Windsor Magazine." If I can say anything to transform such feelings as these into convictions more passionate and patriotic, an agreeable reciprocity between my readers and myself is certain to emerge.

## THE SUPREMACY OF PRINCIPLE.

Statesmanship and statecraft are terms, in themselves, of honourable connotation. I think it is only reasonable to discriminate between these things, attached though they are to each other. It is just as well, whilst asserting the supremacy of principle, and whilst maintaining the need for a lofty vision, to take things as they are and to regard them on their normal plane, the plane of mice and men, admitting that the best of plans will often miscarry, and that caution and some degree of cunning will always be required for the successful conduct of public affairs.

Statesmanship may be abstract, but statecraft is concrete. But, allowing for opportunism, which may often be nothing but a sublimated common-sense, I believe that the average man may be trusted to guide his own actions by sound and very definite principles. These may be acquired by the mere contact with life, or they may be instilled by the process of education. And we all have the rudiments of a civic

conscience within us. In fact, the human being of to-day may rightly be described as a political animal.

## THE ADVANTAGES OF DEMOCRACY.

Since these considerations have their bearing on the making of a statesman as such, they may become of practical interest to any reader of these lines. Leadership will always be required. Many keen partisans even prefer to be led. Statesmanship itself is within easy reach. Application or originality may take a man almost anywhere. "The time will come when you will hear me," said Benjamin Disraeli, and such ideas as these are capable of considerable expansion. From any street-corner now the wind may blow a man along the avenue of personal distinction. That advantage at least must be conceded to democracy.

For the ambitious I might adduce other encouragements. They are drawn from experience. The aphorism which forces on a poet the need, as poet, to be born, does not apply to the actor in public affairs. History, indeed, records the names of many statesmen whose genius has been, in the truest sense, innate. The halo of heredity hovers over some figures permanently enshrined in our annals. But the State itself is often glad to be guided by men who have had none of these advantages—by men, indeed, who in a sense can rise above them.

## DREAMS AND POSSIBILITIES.

What, then, is the State to which I have ascribed the provision of such incentives, the exercise of such discriminating power?

I proffer no insular view. I look far afield in time, in space, in imagination. The State is a growth of the past. We cannot ignore its associations, personal or impersonal. To the mind of a Burke or a Pitt, the State



*Photo by]*

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, P.C.

*[Hugh Cecil.*

appeared as a real entity, in no attribute less majestic than were the concepts of a Plato, a Shakespeare, a Milton. Nor would I deny their meed of praise to many who have conceived the State in terms of fantasy. To any man his dread may be allowed, save to him who will not learn from experience, or to those, in their folly, who can only resort to schemes of destruction. It is because sinister methods have

become the vogue that an antidote to such poison is needed.

#### GREAT DEVELOPMENTS.

Indeed, this is the very time for a restatement of possibilities on the constructive side. All communities, all peoples, are directly concerned in the making of the statesman in this newer age, with its amazing developments of speed and



mechanism, its vast increase of adjusting, transferring, communicating power, its interweaving of interests once widely separated, of which our forefathers never dreamed.

In everything with which the welfare of the State is concerned we are at the parting of the ways. One road leads to destruction, the other to prosperity. As far as our own country is concerned, I think that the signs of progress are in the ascendant, though all are not well enough equipped with knowledge to take this larger view. All the more, to make these signs effective, every being alive has a duty to cultivate the idea of statesmanship for himself, and to regard as his own affair the multifarious interests of the nation to which he belongs. For this reason, stock must be taken of everything that might conceivably damage or disintegrate our inheritance.

#### DESTRUCTIVENESS EXPOSED.

The spirit of these times seems to undergo rapid changes and to be very sensitive to varying vibrations. We cannot afford to be ignorant. We may not despise what we have not even taken the trouble to become acquainted with.

Take, for instance, that large and influential school of thought which declares the State we know as essentially "servile," as something to be attacked or abolished—at best to be explained away. I use this phrase with special care, for it reflects the nebulousness of many high-sounding theorists. But I must admit that these schools of thought have shown themselves capable of a wonderful undermining power. They are stronger, I think, than their precursors.

Our own political institutions, of course, have always been in the pillory. If the lethal strength of Carlyle's or Cobbett's strictures had equalled their verbal vigour, all the constructive statesmen of the last generation would have died of shame. But they did not succumb. They took their scoldings patiently and continued their work. That work did unquestionably "broaden down from precedent to precedent." And we must remember that the fabric of Society is deeply rooted. It has formidable sanctions. When I have the honour to carry the Sword of State, I hold it as something more than a symbol.

But the instigators of change, the iconoclasts, are by no means disheartened. Destruction has taken to itself new auxiliaries. It has grown new wings. Though

it is a real danger, this symptom of evil can be discounted. By cultivating its opposite in the making of a statesman, by building rather than by destroying, we can prepare ourselves to deal with it by helping the constructive cause or by becoming constructive ourselves. Retrospect has helped us a little. We have given other builders their due. But we must go further back. We must return to first principles.

#### SETTLED LAWS.

"Right and wrong are real distinctions," as Gibbon pointed out. The late Lord Morley held that the general ideas of the thinker were necessary to judge the particular problems of the statesman, and few will doubt that order, which is the traditional law of the universe, is an essential part of constitutional progress. No symbolism has had greater effect on our own theories of settled government than the credit given to enactments that were first inscribed on tablets of stone and issued from a height. Such codes as these the conscience of civilised mankind has recognised as fundamental, even final.

Now, though it has been said that finality is a discredited word, I apprehend that we do live, to all intents and purpose, under a regimen of settled law. Of course we have to assume that expediency must often be the rule in things political. Even so, there is something stable, something compelling, to which the statesman can always appeal. The work of the framers of Magna Carta, in the direction of freedom, has not been shaken by any later promulgation.

If this be so in internal affairs, stronger instances of universal suasion might be given to show the force which lies behind that ethical recognition of justice which is accepted by every historian who has described the advance of man.

#### A DUALITY AT WORK.

Here the province of the statesman in the making is sensibly enlarged. The average man cannot fail to be glad of this enlargement. Anyone in any business may be impressed at times by the possible volume of his own commitments. We live in an expanding era. For that alone we are fortunate to be alive. We all have to do more for ourselves if we are to get ahead, which means that in doing it we can do more for the State.

Happily the wider the occupation, the

simpler and clearer the principles on which everything has to be dealt with. This is specially the case with those matters which lie within the province of the statesman to decide. In Europe recently we have lived through a period of great decisions. The biggest of these had to be taken by statesmen who had to recognise that the overwhelming issue of peace or war was purely a question of honour, and it could only be answered by the offering up of life itself. So in every crisis the juxtaposition of facts in sharp contrast and opposition always provides but two courses. There is always a duality at work. Good government is impeded, for instance, if there be not at the same time a strong working opposition. If we have that now, I shall fear the less for progress in the still critical days which lie immediately ahead. The crises of peace and war will recur. In the meantime it is well to remind ourselves of some distinctions, and to consider how the statesmen of the future ought to deal with them.

#### HONOUR AT STAKE.

When the greatest challenge ever issued to our country was met by a decision to fight for honour, that decision was arrived at by men who at one moment seemed likely to disregard that particular claim. For reasons which I will not stigmatise as discreditable, pacific instincts are supposed to be inherent in democracy. But a little thought, supplemented by knowledge of the past, will show how often pacific instincts defeat themselves, and how often pacific actions follow suit. When John Ruskin taught the refinements of artistic life or planned his economic redistributions, he did not forget to extol the career of the warrior, or to declare that a lack of soldierly discipline and the exercise of the sword can only be the forerunner of decay in a nation.

The point might be illustrated by other striking instances, for it is a trite thing, but a true thing, to say that honour is priceless, and that a peace without it is no real peace at all. "Democracy," one of our most trenchant writers and speakers has recently observed, "can be defended because it gives opportunity to the greatest number; but it is the way in which it works which is important, and it must be remembered that Abraham Lincoln fought a war to prevent democracy making a fool of itself."

This is reasoning which I think worthy of adoption. The parting of the ways, of which I have spoken, does not preclude the

practical certainty of future wars. We therefore have to be on our guard lest softness or sentimentality, leading to loss of vigilance and lack of preparation, precipitate the very dangers which for the sake of humanity we desire to avoid.

Statesmanship requires the open mind. The most open minds are those which have had access to every kind of knowledge. That classical tradition in which many of our leaders have been trained still offers possibilities of incalculable value, for thereby we "see things steadily and see them whole"; and if we enter Westminster Abbey, or any other temple of reconciliation, we can see for ourselves and feel a crystallisation of progressive ideas in all the atmosphere, even while the sense of the past overwhelms us.

#### THE OPEN MIND.

To translate this feeling into something that may serve our country to-day is the function of statesmen who would prove themselves leaders. That he himself may rise to the potentialities thus opened up, should be the object of every man who, as I have suggested is the case, has become the inheritor of a real position in the State—one in which among his fellows every day he can be of service, one which through the widening of chances, above all, by the application of principle, may itself become a stepping-stone.

I do not forget that with all the forcefulness, the decision of character which statesmanship really requires, the open mind is bound to give full play to the gentler virtues. No man has ever made a mark on the history of his time without being very strong in "Yea" and "Nay," or, again, if he has, on the other hand, been deficient in the humanities. But what was true yesterday is true for ever. I have commended, in one sense, the martial spirit, and yet I know with what effect a phrase from Horace, a line from Cowper, a passage from the speeches of John Bright, may expose the follies of men. But then any war can be condemned in retrospect. Pious opinions cannot be weighed against practical options. If honour be involved, the die must be cast. But it is more important for us, seeing that no *casus belli* is actually imminent, to see where these principles lead us in other matters which concern the State. The statesman now, with those multitudes—who are part of statesmanship in being because they have their public share in all things—

ought to understand where they stand and know what they can do. I am not unmindful of certain limitations, of course. The frustration of the most knavish tricks of enemies, involving many matters that cannot be proclaimed from the house-tops, is a mystery to me which the multitude will never share.

#### PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE.

Everything else, I think, in public matters issues out of remoteness into nearness, through education, through increased opportunities, through the open mind. I do not feel at all influenced in matters of state by the kind of remoteness which is practically inconceivable. The honours of the Pliocene period I am content to leave to Sir Arthur Keith, the myths of the millennium to Mr. H. G. Wells. But the teachings of Greece are still for me an inexhaustible mine of political experience, and the history of this Empire to me is a natural expansion of the imperial liberties of Rome.

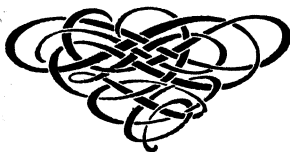
Therefore, because the imperial freedom under which we live is a reality, I am anxious to see it more and more fitted to a new age, the fortunes of which can only be endangered by extremists. Those extremists are not of a single type. They have, I think, been practically put out of court by the demonstrations they have given in the art and sciences of destructiveness. But extremists of a more insidious kind are those with whom we have to deal in the

making of the statesmen of the future. And I think we shall see, as in the past, the progress that we need effected by the emergence of individuals strong enough to advance on their own lines. Constructive statesmanship always becomes practical through the emergence of an individual man.

#### THE NEW STATESMAN.

Such a man, the type most needed at the present time, it is by no means impossible to envisage, nor is he very difficult to describe. The past is with him in everything he says or does. He believes that, though circumstances change, the wise man can change with them, but only to the extent that is compatible with prudence. In those times when astrology had influence, the strong man was said to govern his stars. So with the strong man of to-day. If I prefigure the contemporary facts with sufficient accuracy, I believe I shall end by drawing the portrait of a man.

This man may come from any class in the community. He may serve in any profession. Without education he must be lost. But education is within the reach of all. The future is with us, and it is full of hope, but it can only be acted upon through acceptance of the present combined with appreciation of the past. Any human being who takes these things to heart may play any part he chooses, and so secure, for the advantage of his own epoch and of eventual posterity, the making of a statesman.

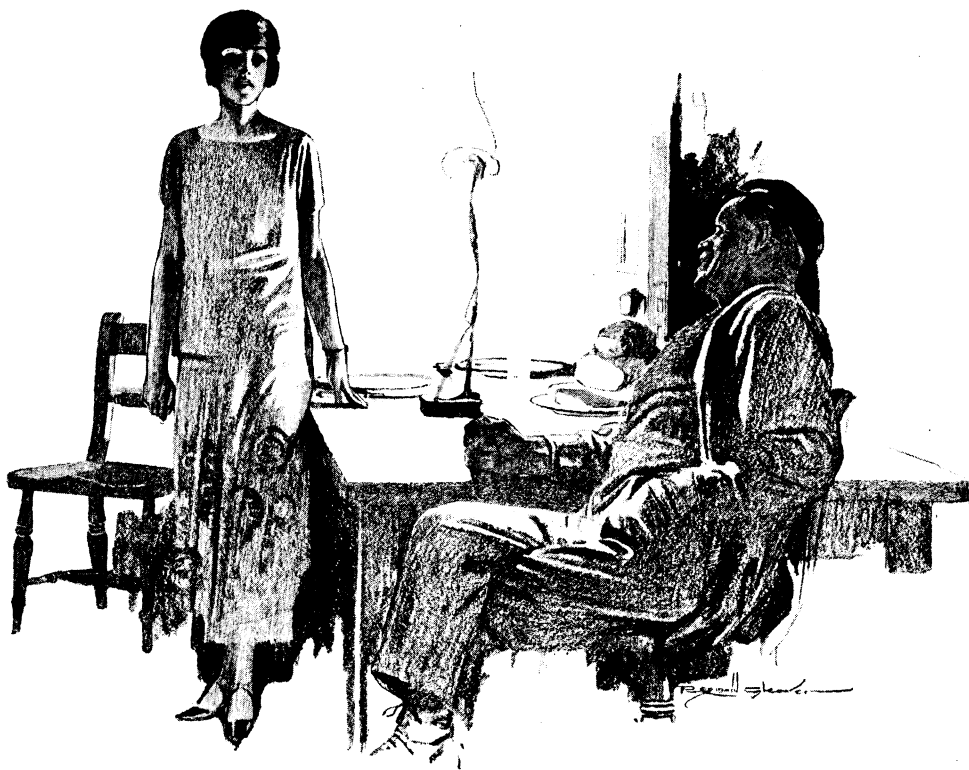


## FROM WHAT HEART?

**O**H, from what heart has this sweet folly flown,  
That clothed in music makes such joyous din,  
And every man would have it for his own,  
And every maiden take the wanderer in?

**O**h, from what love has this sweet folly sprung,  
That wrapt in verses shows such happy wit,  
And every swain would have it on his tongue,  
And each fair mistress hear the sound of it?

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.



"Oh, but I mustn't keep you," she said eagerly. "You'll be wanting to get home." "That's all right. My old woman knows better than to sit up for me."

# A SHILLING IN THE SLOT

By RALPH DURAND

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

**H**ILDA BOLTON savagely pulled a rose to pieces and dropped the petals on to her plate.

"I don't know why you married me if you want to go out every evening," she said. "If you can't stay at home when we've been married only three months, you'll never want to come home at all by the time we've been married three years."

Jack Bolton was too inexperienced to know that if there is one thing an angry woman dislikes more than accuracy it is to be asked unanswerable questions.

"Have I ever been out on any evening at

all since we were married?" he asked with what he meant to be an air of inexhaustible patience.

"I don't want to go out in the evenings and leave *you* all alone."

"Do be fair, Hilda. You can see all you want of your friends in the afternoons while I'm stuck at the office. A man can't cut himself off altogether from the world when he marries."

"Then why do you go to places where you can't take me?"

"I've told you three times already that I'd get out of this engagement if I could.

But I can't. Three years ago, when I won the Oxford Light Weight Championship, I promised my trainer that if I could ever do him a good turn I would. Stephens is down on his luck now, and can't earn his living. Some of his old backers said they would get up a benefit for him if he could get me to spar half a dozen exhibition rounds. I can't go back on my word to old Stephens. Now, can I?"

"A common prize-fighter! Why don't you associate with gentlemen?"

"I do. Stephens can hardly write his own name, but he's as thorough a gentleman as I've ever come across. Perhaps you and I don't mean the same thing when we use the word. In its narrow sense a gentleman is a man of some education who does not have to work for his living at any job that dirties his hands. In its broadest and best sense, when one talks about a gentleman one means a man who has never hit below the belt, or done a dirty trick, or failed to keep a promise, no matter what it cost him to keep it."

Hilda yawned ostentatiously. "Here endeth the first lesson," she sneered, and swept out of the room.

Jack followed her as far as the hall. Slowly he put on his hat and coat. Then he opened the drawing-room door. Hilda was standing in a regal attitude, one small foot on the fender, one graceful bare arm resting on the mantelpiece, augustly aloof, majestically angry.

"I'm just off, sweetheart," he said. "I'll try not to be very late."

Hilda bowed like a bored princess at a dreary civic reception, but said nothing.

Jack turned away. With his hand on the handle of the front door, he hesitated. Then he steeled his heart and passed out.

"She must learn to be reasonable," he said to himself.

As she heard the street door open, Hilda had to fight hard against an impulse to run after him and say one forgiving word.

"He must learn how to treat me," she said.

She sat down at the piano and struck three false chords in two minutes. She opened a book and found that she had to read each sentence twice to grasp its meaning, and that the meaning, when found, was not worth the trouble. She turned over the pages of *Punch*, and the humour seemed strained and flat. She got out her needlework, and it lay idle in her lap.

She heard the postman's knock at the

door, and wondered why no one brought the letters. Then she remembered that she had given all the servants leave to be out till eleven to attend a parish *fête*, and given it gladly, thinking how jolly it would seem to be all alone all through the evening with Jack. She had not reckoned on being all alone by herself, and her anger against Jack deepened.

Never in all her life had she been alone by herself at night. And Jack was amusing himself!

Suddenly the electric light burned dim and went out. She sat upright, clutching the arms of her chair, drops of cold perspiration gathering on her forehead, listening. Surely burglars had broken in, had turned off the light at the main switch, and would soon be coming upstairs. She groped her way into the hall so as to be ready to dash out into the street and scream for help when the need came.

In the hall a gleam of comforting light from a street lamp shone dimly through the fanlight above the door and through panels of stained glass on either side of it. It restored her to her normal balance. She realised what was wrong, and the explanation of the sudden darkness was reassuringly commonplace.

When the first electric light bill had been presented, Jack had made a great fuss about the amount used. He had spoken very firmly to all the servants about switching off unwanted lights, and, the better to check extravagance, had had the ordinary meter replaced by one that supplied a shilling's worth of light in exchange for a shilling in its slot. The new meter had been installed only two days, and no one in the house had had time to get accustomed to its eccentricities. It was just like Jack to make an arrangement that was inconvenient to everyone but himself! Reasonable husbands left matters of household management to their wives! And it was unpardonably careless of him to go off for an evening's amusement without making sure that the supply of light was in no danger of running out.

There was nothing for it but to sit in the dimly-lit hall till Jack or the servants returned. Hilda did not know where she had left her purse, and she could not go all over the house looking for it, striking matches as she went. Besides, she did not know where the matches were kept.

The clock in the hall ticked dolefully. Another on the tower of the church at the

corner of the street, after calling public attention by pompously striking the four quarters, announced to all who cared to listen that it was nine o'clock. All the clocks in the house—there had been at least a dozen among the wedding presents—repeated the information. The reverberation in the empty house seemed to emphasise the loneliness.

Hilda tried to divert herself by listening to the rare footsteps in the street approach and pass and die away in the distance, but hours seemed to pass before the church clock again struck the quarter. An hour and three-quarters must pass, seven tedious quarters, one hundred and five dragging minutes, before the maids were due to return. Jack, caring for no one but himself, would probably be later. Probably everyone who passed would gladly help her out of her trouble if she could bring herself to ask it. She found herself listening more intently to the footsteps of the passers-by, as if she could tell by the sound which of them seemed likely to be good-natured. Suddenly the strain of waiting in the dark became intolerable. Someone was passing. Hilda flung open the door, ran down the steps, and accosted the owner of the feet.

"Please," she gasped, "could you lend me a shilling?"

There are certain types of mankind, especially in highly civilised countries and thickly populated towns, who deeply distrust anything unusual. And it certainly is unusual, outside a respectable-looking house—but even the most respectable-looking houses may harbour most undesirable characters—to be accosted at nine o'clock at night by a very young and very pretty woman, in semi-evening dress, who asks for the loan of a shilling. Hilda was unfortunate in her choice of a knight-errant. She addressed her appeal to a man who had used the same pen at the same desk of the same office every working day for twenty uneventful years. And he, having long since lost any taste for adventure that he may ever have had, shook his head with a grunt and passed on.

Bitterly humiliated, Hilda went back into the house, determined not to risk being snubbed a second time. But when another fifteen tedious minutes had ticked away, loneliness and darkness seemed worse than any rebuff. Passers-by were becoming few. She realised that she must take the next chance that offered itself.

"Do listen to me a moment, please," she said, when the chance came, breathlessly repeating a carefully composed explanatory speech. "My husband is away, and I am all alone in the house, and the electric light has gone out. If you would very kindly lend me a shilling to put in the meter and would give me your name and address, I could send—"

So embarrassed was she at having to make so unusual a request to an absolute stranger that not till she had got so far with the speech she had prepared did she realise that she was speaking to a man to whom it was not at all prudent to admit that she was alone in the house. Between his teeth he rolled the charred butt of a dead cigar. A cheese-cutter cap was perched rakishly at the back of his head. He wore a blue jersey in place of a waistcoat, and the tang of the sea was all over him.

There is no logical reason why an unprotected girl should be more afraid of a seaman than of a milkman, but Hilda was too flustered for logic. Books she had read had given her a composite picture of a sailor as bold and reckless, fond of a practical joke, addicted to rum, a dodger of Customs officials, not a scrupulous observer of the Sixth Commandment. This man seemed typical of the class. For example, he did not look at her as a milkman would have looked at her. He smiled at her quizzically as a man may smile at a kitten he is teasing.

"Hubby away and all alone in the dark, eh?" he said. "That's a bit awkward for you."

"But it doesn't really matter," said Hilda, backing away from him. "Please don't trouble. I don't really mind a bit."

She turned to run up the steps, but the seaman slipped nimbly past her through the front door into the house.

Some people have the idea that the difference between a brave man and a coward is that the brave man does not know what fear is and the coward does. They are wrong. The difference is that a brave man stands up to whatever he is afraid of, and the coward runs away from it. Hilda was abominably afraid, but it did not occur to her to run away or scream for help. She followed the seaman into the house, still protesting that she did not wish to trouble him.

"No trouble at all," he said, striking a match on his trousers. "Where's yer meter?"

"At the top of the kitchen stairs. But it doesn't matter a bit. Really it doesn't."

He found the meter, transferred the match to his left hand, and lifted a shilling towards the slot. At the critical moment the flame reached his fingers. He said what men say when they burn their fingers, and dropped both match and shilling. The match went out. The shilling bounded from step to step down the kitchen stairs and rolled away along the kitchen floor. At the same moment a draught of wind slammed the front door with a resounding clang.

"My only shilling!" said the seaman cheerfully. "Never mind. I've got plenty of matches. Come on, let's look for it."

Hilda followed him down the kitchen stairs, entreating him not to bother any further, assuring him that she did not in the least mind the dark, saying that her husband would be home soon, and promising that she would send him ten shillings for the trouble he had taken, if he would leave his name and address.

The seaman paid no attention to her whatever. In the kitchen he struck another match. Its light disclosed a supper that the maids had laid in readiness for their return—a loaf of bread, a pat of butter, a slab of cheese and a tin of sardines. At sight of the sardines the seaman chuckled reassuringly.

"Soon have a light now," he said.

He threw away the match, and in the darkness Hilda heard him open a clasp-knife and hack at the sardine tin. She did not interfere. It seemed useless. At the back of her fear, too, was a lively curiosity as to what he was going to do. The sound of tearing cotton followed. Then the seaman struck another match and held it to a wick he had made from his handkerchief and soaked in the sardine oil. It caught and gave out a thin yellow flame.

"Trust old Sam to know the ropes," he said. "I've been on ships where they were too mean to let us have paraffin to light the fo'c'sle. We had to burn grease from the cook's galley. It stank worse'n this."

A ship's fore-castle must be a horrible place to live in, thought Hilda, for the thick greasy blue smoke from the burning sardine oil smelt atrociously. Sam made things worse by putting his cigar butt into the flame and puffing at it till it was well alight.

"Now we're all cosy and comfortable," he said, seating himself in the cook's chair.

"I'll stay and look after you till hubby comes back."

The suggestion very naturally appalled Hilda.

"Oh, but I mustn't keep you," she said eagerly. "You'll be wanting to get home."

"That's all right. My old woman knows better than to sit up for me."

"But—but my husband will be home quite soon now."

"Ah! And I'll have a word to say to my lord. He's got no business to leave a slip of a girl like you all alone. He must know there's plenty of burglars about as'd try their luck in a big house like this if they saw no lights burning. He ought to be ashamed of himself."

"But, please, I really won't keep you," said Hilda, desperately racking her brains for an excuse to get rid of her unbidden guest. "You see, I'm not accustomed to tobacco smoke."

Sam extinguished his cigar against the heel of his foot and put it away in the lining of his hat.

"Excuse an old shellback, mum," he said apologetically. "Forgotten my manners."

"If you are waiting for the money I promised you," faltered Hilda, taking a brooch from her gown and offering it to him, "will you take this instead? It's worth much more than ten shillings."

"Never mind about my shilling," said Sam generously. "I've got plenty more at home."

"But—oh, I'd much rather you went away!" pleaded Hilda.

"Why?"

Sam leaned across the table and stared at her fiercely with glittering eyes—eyes that had grown keen in many a long night watch staring through rain and flying spray. Hilda shrank from them. Then they softened. The seaman chuckled.

"Blimey, I do believe you're afraid of me!" he said. "Frightened of old Sam! Bless your heart, I wouldn't hurt you! I'm your friend, I am. That's why I'm here. I'm a respectable married man, and I've got a girl of my own about your age. In service in this neighbourhood, she is. Just been visiting her. Gave me some sherry wine, she did, what the cook at her place has to put into the soup, she tells me. That'll show you the class of place she's in. I never hurt a woman yet." He stepped to the area door, flung it open, and returned to his seat. "There miss—mum, I should say—you

run up them steps and holler blue murder if I do anything as a gentleman shouldn't."

Hilda was reassured. After all, if he had come into the house to steal he would not waste time sitting in the cook's chair. Her physical fear gave way to hysterical inclination to laugh at Sam's comparison of himself to a gentleman.

"Of course, I'm sure you are—quite a gentleman."

"Devil a bit of it, mum. Only a hard case deep-water Jack. But I know how a gentleman ought to act. I've seen it at the moving pictures. Always when a lady is up against it, and some blackguard is trying to do the dirty on her, a real gentleman comes along in the nick of time and bashes his face in. When you told me how you was fixed, I asked myself what a real gentleman would do, and I told myself it was my place to take your hubby's watch on deck till he comes home. Where's he gone to?"

"To a prize-fight."

It was disloyal of Hilda, now that her fears were soothed, to let her irritation against Jack appear in the tone in which she answered, but it relieved her to speak peevishly. Sam caught the note of ill-temper and seemed unaccountably concerned by it.

"Not been married long, have you?" he asked gravely. "Only three months! Well, now, I'm going to shove my oar in where it isn't asked and give you a bit of advice. Same as I'd give my own girl as I told you about. You may not like it, but you'll live to thank me for it. Don't try to keep your husband shut up at home all the time. It's like keeping a dog on the chain—makes him vicious. And so long as he treats you proper and brings his wages home regular, and doesn't yaw out of his course beyond reason, don't try to luff him too close to the wind. You're like my old woman was when she was your age—I can see that. Before we was married she thought I was kind of perfect, and that's a thing no man is, I don't care who says the contrary. And she didn't have time to learn better before I was away to sea. But my next spell ashore she saw I wasn't quite what she thought I was, and started in telling me things for my own good—like me telling you now!

"There was a young lady, what they calls a district visitor, used to come to the house and used to shove her oar in, same as I'm doing." Hilda had a twinge of conscience. She herself had done a little

district-visiting, in homes carefully selected by her vicar. "She told my ole woman that beer was the broad road that leadeth to destruction and wrecked more homes than anything else. And nothing would satisfy the missus but I must give up the beer. And I did, too, I was that fond of her. When I came home after the next voyage, it was tobacco—bad for the heart, the district visitor said—and to please Polly I tried to give that up, too. But that was asking too much. I was always slipping out of doors, saying I wanted to stretch my legs, just to get a smoke, and that made me feel mean. And if it was cold or wet, I naturally went into a pub. And that meant having a glass. So, you see, I broke my promise both ways. And feeling mean made me feel angry against Polly. And when I came home again she'd suspect, and I'd tell a lie, and she wouldn't believe me, and we'd quarrel. And I'd sit indoors sulking, and all the time it would be 'Your long legs is in my way again, Sam,' and 'Can't you see I'm busy? Why don't you read the newspaper?' till I give you my word I could almost have hit her."

The greasy smoke from the burning sardine oil rose in a thin blue spiral. The yellow flame flickered and made Sam's shadow dance grotesquely against the kitchen dresser. A cockroach came out from under the gas-stove and twiddled its long antennæ. Sam sighed. A shadow passed across his face. He seemed to be recalling bitter memories.

"One day, when things was like that," he continued, "the district visitor came in. I up and told her 'Thank you kindly for your visits,' I said, 'but they're doing more harm than good. You and my missus between you,' I said, 'are trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. It ain't no manner of use, and it hurts the sow something horrid. And as for wrecking homes,' I said, 'though I know you mean well, the beer ain't in it alongside of you.' After that my ole woman and me drew up articles. I was always to tell the truth about where I'd been and what I'd done, and she was to ease the helm a bit, and let me knock about with my pals in reason, and have my beer in reason. And since that day I've never took too much. We've been married twenty-five years now, and there's not a happier couple between Limehouse Causeway and the Victoria Dock. I know I've no call to give you advice, but I don't like to see young married folk making heavy weather of it— Listen! What's that?"



The street door had opened and closed very softly, and someone was moving with stealthy footsteps in the hall. Sam's eyes danced with excitement.

"Burglars!" he exclaimed joyfully. "You stay safe here, my dear. I'll bash 'em!"

\* \* \* \*

Jack found his old trainer pathetically grateful to him for appearing at his benefit. He sparred brilliantly. He was warmly cheered. Old friends slapped him on the back. New ones lionised him, and he never spent a more wretched evening. He was sore at heart because Hilda had parted from him in anger, and a nasty unreasonable little devil in his mind tortured him with silly fears of what might happen to her in his absence. Burglars might break in; she might be stricken with sudden illness; the house might catch fire.

Before the last bout of the evening was fought he could stand the strain no longer. He shook off his friends and admirers, cut short the trainer's thanks, hurried out of the hall, urged a cab-driver to take him at top speed to the station, and when he got there learned from an irritatingly unperturbed porter that he must wait half an hour for a train. In the train he could hardly sit still, and when he left it he ran the whole of the way home.

From the street he saw that the house was in darkness. No reassuring light at any of the windows showed that all was well indoors. His gloomy forebodings redoubled. Then he told himself that he was a silly ass, that Hilda had gone to bed, and that the only thing he need worry about was to get into the house so quietly that he would not wake her. With elaborate caution he unlocked the front door, closed it behind him, and groped his way up the stairs.



"She might as well have tried to hold back a traction engine."

He had reached the first landing when he heard a scurry of feet on the kitchen stairs and Hilda's voice calling:

"Jack, Jack, run upstairs! Upstairs for your life!"

He was not the man to run away from anything or anybody unless he saw good reason. Straining his eyes in the darkness, he crouched for a spring, listening to the advancing footsteps. At the right moment he leaped forward and downward, coming into contact with and grabbing an unseen

man. Locked in each other's arms, they rolled down the stairs and fell to the floor together, taking with them three pictures, a hanging barometer, and the hat-rack.

Then followed the fight of Jack's life. In the ring he had fought with gloved fists for sport. Now he was fighting without the

silver wedding presents. For a moment he lay on his back, his head among the umbrellas, with fourteen stone weight of burly humanity on top of him, reserving his strength, waiting to discover what his opponent's next move would be. Then, with a mighty wrench and heave, he won

the uppermost place. Before he decided on his next move he was underneath again. From a spectacular point of view the fight would have been uninteresting, for neither combatant



"Letting go of Sam's ribs, he flung one arm round his neck, straining his head with all his strength against his shoulder."

gloves for Hilda, for hearth and home, besides—for he was convinced that his antagonist was an unusually enterprising burglar—at least a hundred pounds worth of

dared let go his hold of the other. But there was only one spectator, and she, poor girl, could see nothing in the darkness. She could only hear laboured breathing and

the sound of heavy bodies writhing on the parquet floor. Again and again she cried to them to stop. They took no more notice of her than the waves of the sea take of the plaint of a seagull. Perhaps they did not hear her. Certain it is that, because the savage in every man is only a little way beneath the surface, and because each believed himself to be fighting in a thoroughly just cause, each was thoroughly enjoying himself.

Suddenly Jack felt Sam let go his hold. He felt a pair of muscular hands groping for his throat. A sense of his danger and fierce resentment at so unsportsmanlike a breach of all rules gave him new strength. Letting go of Sam's ribs, he flung one arm round his neck, straining his head with all his strength against his shoulder, and with his free hand rained blows on the spot where he supposed his opponent's kidneys to be. The pain of the blows was too much for Sam. With a convulsive heave he drew up his knees, wrenched his neck free, and rolled clear. Both men staggered to their feet together. Sam, his back to the door, groped for the supposed burglar. Jack, facing the dim light that shone through the stained glass panel that flanked the door, saw his opponent's face in silhouette. With all the weight of his body behind the blow, he struck at the point of the chin, and Sam fell in a limp heap, unconscious.

Hilda's contribution to the fight had been negligible. All the way up the kitchen stairs she had clutched at the skirts of Sam's coat. She might as well have tried to hold back a traction engine. When he and Jack rolled down the main stairs together, she had jumped back instinctively, but not quickly enough to escape a kick on the leg from one or other of the combatants. The hatrack in falling had grazed her shoulder painfully, and one or other, when struggling to his feet, had stamped on her toes. But when she saw her husband's face, unhurt, by the same light that had betrayed Sam, she forgot her pain in fear of what he might have unwittingly done.

"Oh, Jack, have you killed him?" she cried.

"Hope so," said Jack brutally. "What's the matter with the light? Why don't you switch it on?"

"The meter needs a shilling. And, Jack, I've been sitting for hours in the dark, and—oh, I've been so frightened!"

Jack groped for the meter, and in a moment the hall was a blaze of light. It

showed Sam lying dreadfully still, his knees bent, his arms outspread.

"He's dead!" said Hilda faintly.

"Dead! Not a bit of it. I got him on the point, that's all. I saw his face for a moment, and had my chance to land him a knock-out blow exactly where I wanted to place it."

For a moment Jack stood over his fallen enemy, breathing quickly through the nose, the savage light of victory in his eyes. Then he look at his wife, sobbing, unstrung, dishevelled.

"You poor little thing!" he said remorsefully, clasping her and straining her to his breast. "What a brute I am to have let you in for this!"

"Oh, Jack, I've been so miserable!"

"I'll never leave you alone at night again—never as long as I live."

"Of course you must when you want to," sobbed Hilda, hysterical with the sudden shock of relief. "If a husband is kept shut up, he gets vicious. I mean, you can't make a silk sow out of a purse. I mean—oh, I don't know what I mean, but I'm never going to be selfish again! Kiss me, Jack."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sam sighed, opened his eyes, and blinked at the light. For a moment he did not know where he was, nor why the hall was strewn with wrecked furniture, nor why the girl he recognised, as his senses came back to him, was sobbing on the shoulder of a man the wings of whose collar were arched like a pair of horns growing out of his neck. When he remembered, it occurred to him that the best thing a man who has made an ass of himself can do is to disappear unostentatiously and without explanation. He sat up, reached for his fallen cap and put it on, recovered his cigar stub from among the broken glass of the barometer, and put it between his teeth. One of his eyes had suffered from contact with the banisters. For a moment he watched the reconciled pair with the other, a grin of amusement on his face. Then he rose softly to his feet, gently opened the door, and let himself out.

Until he had turned the corner of the street, dislike of having to make or listen to apologies gave him speed. Then the humour of the situation mastered him. All of a sudden the quiet of the most dignified street of what house-agents describe as a highly eligible neighbourhood was profaned by cachinnation more uproarious than ever

rang from the gallery of a Dockland music-hall. Sam whooped and roared till his breath gave out and his laughter died down into gasps and splutters.

A policeman on duty, shocked at hearing a cackling noise such as may have been made by the prehistoric monster hen that laid the first egg of the ancient controversy, quickened his pace to a run, convinced that he had to do with a gross example of the offence for which offenders have to pay His Majesty forty shillings or accept his hospitality for a month. But when he reached Sam, clasping area railings as he gasped for breath, the offender had ceased to be disorderly and could not be charged with being drunk.

"Not guilty, your worship," said Sam

faintly. "Lor lumme, I've 'ad such a lark!"

"You've been fighting," said the guardian of the peace and respectability sternly. "It's no use telling me you 'aven't. Look at that eye of yours!"

"Just a friendly sparring match with a pal. And it kind of cheered me up, like."

"Well, you push on out of this and don't make that 'orrid noise again. This is a respectable neighbourhood, this is."

The policeman stood and sternly watched Sam out of sight. As he resumed his leisurely pacing he heard the laughter rise again. This time he merely shrugged his shoulders. The offender had passed off his beat and was no more concern of his.



## DEVON.

**T**HE girls of St. Budeaux be strolling about  
For to see if the bluebells be lately come out.  
There's a primrose a-peeping, a violet awakes,  
And the rain from his wing-tips the blackbird he shakes.

The humming-bird flits in the pomegranate tree,  
And the orange flower scatters clear honey on me.  
The skies of the West they be cloudless and blue,  
But 'tis Devon I'm wanting—ah, what will I do?

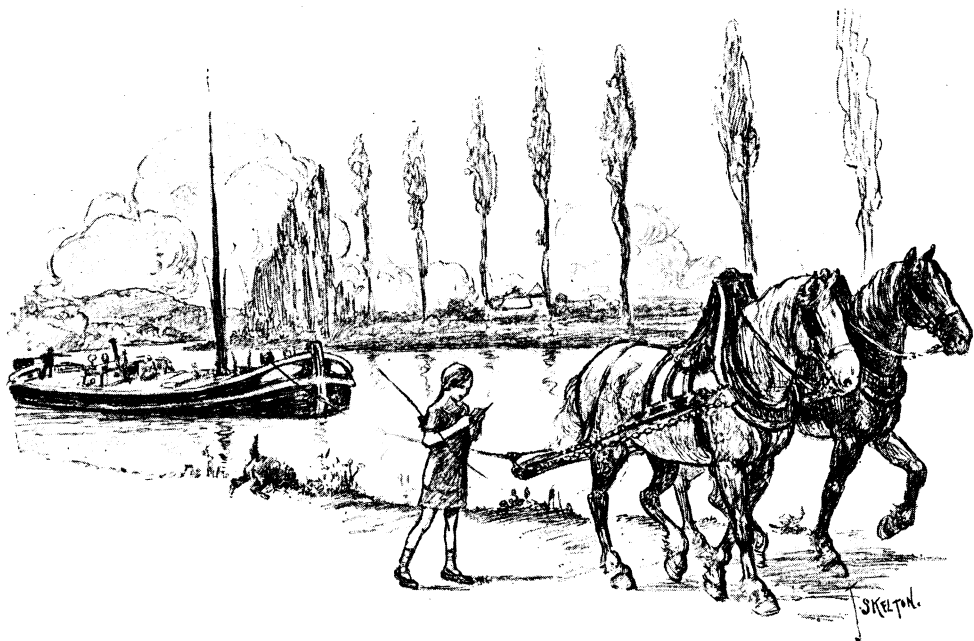
I'd give you all summer, its song and its flower,  
Every sweet grove of orange for one little hour;  
I'd give you the sunshine, each bloom on the plain,  
For to wander once more down a Devonshire lane.

I'm weary with longing, I'm wan with bright weather,  
I pine for the mists on my Devonshire heather.  
I'd give the Pacific, the gold of the West,  
Just to peep at blue eggs in a hedge-sparrow's nest.

Old Bellevor Tor stands all hoary in mist,  
And the winds from the Channel the furze blooms have kissed.  
The foxes are romping down Blackabrook way,  
Oh, I would I were walking in Devon to-day!

The pomegranate nods and the mocking-bird trills,  
But the skylark he soars o'er my Devonshire hills.  
The drowsy Pacific is dreamy and blue—  
'Tis Devon I'm wanting—ah, what will I do?

BILL ADAMS.



"A quieter, sedater pair of barge horses you could not find throughout the length of French or Belgian waterways."

# MAN PROPOSES . . .

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

**D**ESPITE their names, you are not to suppose that Barbare and Féroce were either barbarous or ferocious. However it may have been in their green youth, ten years of unswerving attachment to the *Jacinthe* had purged them of all earthly passions, so that a quieter, sedater pair of barge horses you could not find throughout the length of French or Belgian waterways.

Barbare and Féroce always worked together because the *Jacinthe*, although technically a barge, carried more cargo than many a vessel that had dared the broad Atlantic. Incidentally, she was an ark with a livestock almost as varied as that of Captain Noah's first command. There were Barbare and Féroce, who, when they were not hauling on the long wire tow-rope, lived on board in a snug stable amidships, whence, at such times as the *Jacinthe*, adventuring in tidal rivers, was towed by a steam-tug, their

wise, mild heads protruded, regarding the passing world with solemn approval. They had a landing gangway of their own, and negotiated it, however high its pitch, as skilfully as any sailor. There were César, the big, brown rooster, and his twelve wives, who were so exactly alike that they had but one name between them, being called indistinguishably Alianore. They lived next to the stable, and had another smaller gangway of their own when they wished to go ashore. They were good layers, but too muscular for the table, perhaps because frequently, when the *Jacinthe* started in their absence from home, they were forced to scurry after her along the towpath, protesting volubly, until the next mooring-place was reached. Then there were the two cats, Minu and Toni, who lived in the stern cabin when they were at home at all, which was seldom, and had probably poached over a wider territory than any other cats

in history. Then there was Azor, the dog, who was black and shaggy, and took his responsibilities so seriously that it was a wonder he was not white, and lived in a barrel on top of the stable. And there were Chloe and Coridon, the canaries, who lived in a cage just outside the entrance to the living cabin, and sang a great deal, but, like other famous singers, were not particularly intellectual.

Lastly, there were Jacinthe and her sister L  lie, and Madame Eug  nie Clercx and M. Scaevola Clercx, her husband.

Jacinthe was nineteen, and was called after a predecessor of the barge in which she lived, and L  lie was twelve, and was called after the heroine of a very exciting romance her mother had read shortly before her appearance, and Madame Eug  nie was their mother, and was called by her own mother, who was a convinced Bonapartist, after the Empress, and M. Scaevola was their father, and was called after his own grandfather, who was prominent about the time of the Terror, and preferred a Roman to a French name as proof of patriotism. As to the *Jacinthe*, she was as big as the Ark and as clumsy, and her hull was painted black, and every other bit of her was painted the reddest of reds and the greenest of greens and the whitest of whites, and she had a tiller almost as long as a yacht's mainmast and a rudder as big as its mainsail, and she lay comfortably at rest against the towpath on a bright autumn afternoon, having just come through the tunnel from the Ourcq Canal, and awaiting her turn to go through the lock and down to the big basin below Charenton, where a fussy tug was to pick her up and tow her down the Seine to Rouen, cargo and livestock and family and all. But something was going to happen before then, and Jacinthe—the girl—knew it and was waiting for it.

Just as her namesake was altogether unlike any canal barge you ever saw on the Grand Junction or the Regent's Park Canal, and just as M. Scaevola, who wore a funny green jersey and tight striped trousers and very yellow boots with rather high heels, in no way resembled anything suggested by the word "bargee," so Jacinthe Clercx had very little about her suggestive of the work-a-day world at all. She was very pretty, for one thing, and very smartly dressed for another, and quite well educated for a third, which two latter advantages at least she owed to the good nuns of Geudeghem,

where she was educated. Which is not to say that she was not thoroughly proficient with her parents' profession, and as apt in the manipulation of the great tiller as any freshwater sailor need be. She was by no means averse to this form of exercise either, perhaps because it was of a kind to improve the figure, perhaps, as her sister L  lie suggested, because it was becoming as well to one already possessed of one. And you may suppose that she had not lived for nineteen years without some experience of the human heart and with having broken samples of it throughout hundreds of miles anywhere between Antwerp and Marseilles. She even had an affair—but that is what this story is about.

It was just before four in the afternoon when the *Jacinthe* came to rest against the bank, and wise old Barbare and F  roce, who were on the further bank, having waited until the tow-rope was cast loose, walked quietly along on their own account to the bridge above the lock, and, having crossed it, loitered back towards their stable. Jacinthe, who had made her arrangements beforehand, lost no time in carrying them out. Her father she despatched to the Caf   of the Brave Navigators, to visit his old friend, the patron, and toast a prosperous voyage to Rouen. She reminded him that there had been at least a dozen barges before them waiting their turn to go through the lock, and there was no reason to hurry back. Her mother she despatched with equal promptness so that she should not be too late to match the colour of a length of silk tarlatan she was to purchase at "The Triumph of France" Drapery Store in Saint Maurice. L  lie accompanied her mother, and Jacinthe, with at least half an hour before her—ample for her purpose—brought up the garden from the living cabin and, having put it on the upper hatch, set about watering it with a very neat red watering-pot. I do not suppose that she realised it for a moment, but the nice management of a watering-pot can be almost as becoming as that of a tiller, especially when the garden is made up of four rather broad window-boxes, or their equivalent, painted green and white in stripes, with scarlet battlements at the corners, and set so high that you have to stand almost on tiptoe to direct the water accurately upon the golden brown chrysanthemums. So at least thought Maurice, as he came hurrying along the bank from the bridge, casting occasional nervous

glances over his shoulder, but creditably eager, all the same.

I do not profess to know why Jacinthe had made up her mind that she wanted to marry Maurice, because these things are always individual secrets. He was a pleasant young man enough and sufficiently good-looking, tall for a Frenchman and fair, with his thick hair brushed back after the manner of M. Georges Carpentier—quite presentable, in fact, but not remarkable, considered through masculine eyes. That Madame Eugénie and, to a less degree, M. Scaevola should have disapproved of him, as a possible son-in-law, was less surprising. He occupied a respectable position in the *comptabilité*, or, as we should have it, the counting house of Messrs. Faintoux & Moreau, the principal owners of the *Jacinthe*, but his parents were dead, he had no capital, and it seemed extremely likely that, being of a somewhat unenterprising habit of mind, he would end his life, as he had begun, on the same high stool with only a slightly increased salary. Now, M. Scaevola Clerex was, for all his profession, a warm man and one well-considered. Besides his salary he was the owner of one-quarter share in the *Jacinthe*, and of one-eighth share of her sister-ship, the *Muguet*, both purchased out of the comfortable *dot* brought to him by Madame Eugénie, herself a daughter of the waterways. He owned a house in Bruges, and another at Blois, and a third in Charenton, and he had recently acquired a plot in the *Lotissement* of the Chateau d'Eau at Saint Marice-les-Fosses, on which he was even then erecting a villa that would let for good money, and he had an interest in several cargoes—in short, he was comfortably armoured against the blows of Fate. Most cogent of all, he had sworn a mighty oath, repeated at frequent intervals, that his daughters should marry into their own profession, and that for any suitor to present himself who was not capable of navigating the *Jacinthe* or any sister-ship anywhere in all the great network of inland waterways that covers Northern Europe like a great spider's web, would be regarded in his eyes as little less than an insult. So you may suppose that Maurice, although he worshipped Jacinthe with as ardent a passion as even her many perfections deserved, felt himself hopelessly handicapped from the start, and that his attitude towards her, to say nothing of her family, was characterised rather by tearful meekness than bold self-assertion.

Her reception of him, when he greeted her among the chrysanthemums, was not, he thought, altogether encouraging. Nor, indeed, was it altogether in keeping with the traditions of the well-brought-up French *jeune fille*. Even before he could remember any of the flowery compliments he had been conning over on his way, she stopped him. "Maurice," she asked him almost sharply, "do you wish to marry me?"

This was so far outside the rules of the game that he could only stare at her wild-eyed. "Because, if you don't," she went on with incredible coolness, "M. Tréguier, the son of the armateur at Havre——"

Maurice, goaded into action by the monster of jealousy, was about to burst into fervid protestations, when she checked him. "In that case," she said, and he noticed that as she spoke she was not looking at him, but regarding, with a calculating eye, three barges lying ahead of the *Jacinthe*, which were making leisurely preparations for taking their turn to pass through the lock, "if you do, you must be prepared to make your formal offer to my father in—in just about twelve minutes."

Maurice trembled. "But if I do, adored one of my soul, he will only refuse. What have I, miserable that I am, to offer to Monsieur, your revered parent, that I can offset——"

"I have arranged all that," said the astonishing *jeune fille*. "You will tell him, before he can raise any objections, that although your financial position is lacking in—in exactness, there is one point on which you do not feel yourself unworthy to be his son-in-law. You will tell him that your parents for long centuries have commanded barges, and that you have inherited great ability in the art of navigation, that——"

"But, O most adorable of angels, it is not true."

Jacinthe surveyed him with something perilously near contempt. "I had believed that it was a matter of becoming my husband rather than gaining a prize for truthfulness."

"You do not understand. There is no depth of crime, of ignominy or of worthlessness to which I would not descend to gain the——" He felt that she was becoming impatient. "But he would discover the truth in a moment. He had but to suggest an exercise of skill, and I am exposed—contemned. He would massacre me, and rightly."

"A trial of skill is just what he will suggest—as I have already arranged that he shall do—though it is true that he is not yet aware of it. He will suggest—in less than ten minutes from now—that you prove your skill and make good the promises I have already made for you, by taking charge of the *Jacinthe* from the moment she leaves the bank until, having passed through the lock there, she has reached the basin at Charenton, where the tug is awaiting us."

"But how?" cried Maurice, with a despairing gesture. "I do not even know how to manipulate the—what do you call the thing?—the rudder."

"Azor will instruct you. He at least will make no mistake."

"Azor! The dog!"

She smiled ever so faintly. "Azor, our old black Azor. He is really, you must know, a fairy dog and of incredible wisdom. Listen now carefully, if you ever wish to be my husband. You can recognise Azor's bark? Very well, then. When you hear him bark once, you will push this—the tiller, regard it carefully—over to the right thus, until he barks once again, when you will let it swing back freely. When he barks twice, you will push it to the left, until he again barks twice. Should he give a howl as of pain or terror, it will be the sign that you are making a mistake, and you will at once do just the opposite of whatever you are doing. Finally, when, the lock-gates being open, you have entered the lock and it is necessary to stop, you will hear me cry: 'Down, Azor, down, wicked dog, or I shall instantly destroy thee!' Then you will at once drop the steel mooring-rope—it is this, regard it carefully—over the iron post that you will see standing on the edge of the dock-sill. Is this all clear to you, little cabbage?" For the first time she allowed a note of tenderness to creep into her voice.

"Jacinthe, I swear—I mean that I will do everything that is in my power——"

"Which means," she interrupted, once more a little disdainfully, "that you do not understand. Listen, then, again." She ran carefully over her instructions again, and when she had finished: "Now, for the last time, listen and most carefully, for it is the most important of all. If at any time you should make a mistake and find things going irretrievably wrong, you will hear a cry and a splash in the water. Without a moment of delay you will spring over the

side and throw yourself towards the sound. You understand?"

"But, O my guardian angel, I cannot swim a stroke!"

"As if that mattered! Shall I not be near at hand? But now, attention—I can see my father approaching. He comes from the Café of the Brave Navigators. M. Previeux, the patron, is with him. And they are laughing together. Evidently he is of a good humour. Courage, then, and again courage, for if you hope to win me, now is your chance. Remember only to follow the advice of Azor."

It seemed that M. Scaevola was not only in a good temper, but had some premonition of what awaited him, for when she told him, with all the proper outward signs of maidenly bashfulness, that M. Maurice wished to speak to him privately, he agreed at once, and led the way down into the cabin, where he suggested that they begin proceedings by drinking *un coup* to the health of his daughter. Nor when Maurice, prompted by the potency of this Schiedam, burst into ecstatic protestations, did he show any of the sternness of the offended sire. He even received Maurice's challenge in all good humour, though with a tendency to mirth lacking in paternal dignity. "But understand well," he added with a solemnity marred by an imperfectly mastered smile, "one error, one mistake in navigation, though but of the slightest, and all is at an end. Is it agreed?"

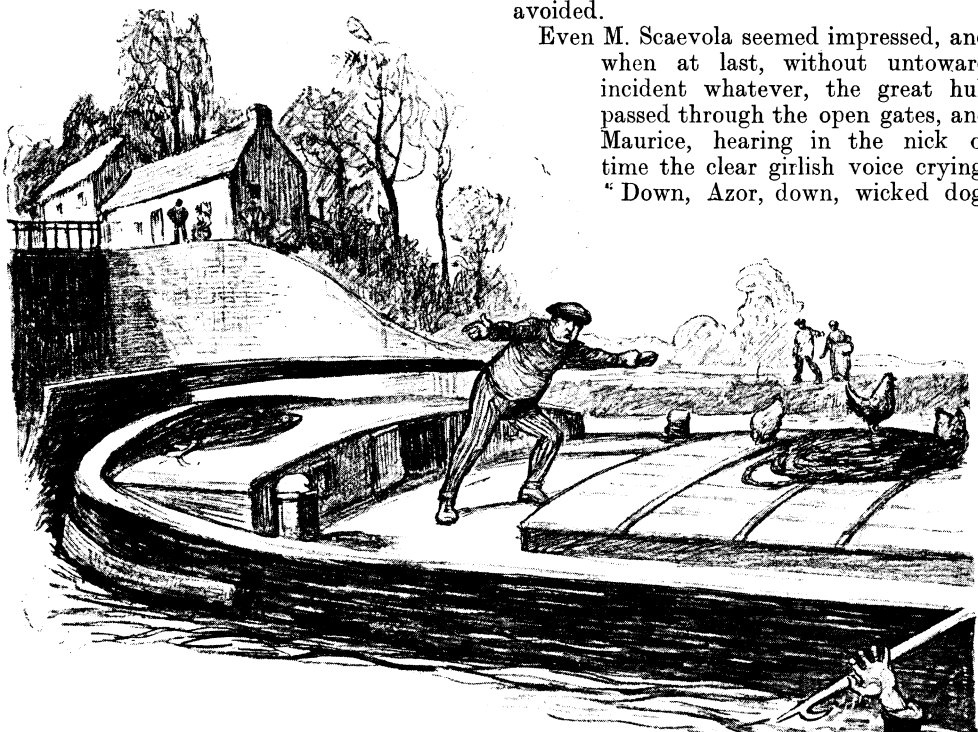
Well might Maurice feel his courage oozing from his boots as they came up on deck again. It seemed as though the whole world was assembled there to witness his incompetence. Jacinthe alone had disappeared, going to her station at the other end of the tow-rope, taking Azor with her on the plea that he needed exercise, and Barbare and Féroce, resignedly shrugging their heavy blue-painted wooden collars, had followed of their own accord to resume their labours. But the patron of the Café of the Brave Navigators was seated on the hatchway, grinning broadly as at some pleasurable anticipation. Madame Eugénie and her younger daughter had returned from their shopping, accompanied by an elderly female friend, and were also smiling at nothing in particular. Several members of the crews of near-lying canal boats were loitering on the bank with no very evident business. Even the animal part of the *Jacinthe* personnel seemed to feel that something unusual was on foot. Minu and Toni,



abandoning the joys of the chase, were on the deck, purring loudly and rubbing their backs against any human legs that came handy. Chloë and Coridon were singing

that nothing could prevent collision with some slothful barge, swinging half across the waterway, but each time the warning sounded in time, and the catastrophe was avoided.

Even M. Scaevola seemed impressed, and when at last, without untoward incident whatever, the great hull passed through the open gates, and Maurice, hearing in the nick of time the clear girlish voice crying, "Down, Azor, down, wicked dog,



"My Maurice, my hero! Now that I am in your heroic arms I am no longer afraid."

at the top of their voices. Even César and the twelve Alianes, who might have been expected to be thinking of their roosts, appeared unexpectedly upon their private gangway and, walking down it with dignified composure, took up position in a line on the edge of the deck, whence they gazed upwards expectantly as though awaiting a shower of worms from heaven.

As Maurice stood miserably beside the tiller, a single sharp bark came suddenly from the farther shore, and at the same time the slack of the tow-rope rose sibilantly out of the water. Automatically Maurice put the great tiller over towards the right, not quickly, indeed, for it was very heavy, but, as it proved, sufficiently, for the *Jacinthe* moved majestically from the bank and swept into mid-stream. Came another sharp bark, and, calling his wits about him, Maurice allowed the tiller to swing back into line again. Thus under expert guidance did the helmsman voyage prosperously towards the lock. Twice indeed it seemed



lest I instantly destroy thee!" remembered to drop the mooring loop over the stanchion and brought her to a standstill within six feet of the further gates, his prospective father-in-law could not repress a murmur of approval, while the landlord of the Café of the Bold Navigators cried openly: "Well done!"

Unfortunately, M. Scaevola and his friend were not the sole members of the jury. Lélie, that is to say, held whispered conference with her mother, reminding her, it

may be, that Jacinthe had long since trained Azor to bark at the word of command. At least, no sooner was the *Jacinthe* at rest within the lock, awaiting the slow lowering of the water-level to free her once more, than Madame Clercx suggested, in a voice that brooked no contradiction, that her

attending strictly to business. Perhaps Azor was careless from a similar cause. Perhaps Lélie, who was at the age when horrid little girls are at their horriddest, had something to do with it. At least, Barbare's heavy foot came down unexpectedly on Azor's favourite corn, and Azor burst into a



"A very large boat-hook, deftly wielded by the patron of the Café of the Bold Navigators."

elder daughter return on board, and that Lélie take her place at the heads of Barbare and Féroce, who, having passed below the bridge, were patiently awaiting the signal to start again. Nor, the change being made, would she allow Jacinthe to come within twenty feet of the tiller, directing her to keep forward to guard against possible fouling of the tow-rope. Four heavy-laden barges were lying off the lock entrance, awaiting their turn to pass through. They lay two and two abreast, taking up, perhaps, half the width of the canal, but leaving ample room to pass, and Maurice, receiving no further instructions, and doubting what to do, was wisely allowing events to take their course. Then the catastrophe happened. Perhaps Barbare and Féroce, in their anxiety as to their mistress's future, were looking round their collars instead of

torrent of amazed reproaches, and Maurice, in sudden panic, put the tiller hard over to the right, and the *Jacinthe* obediently headed straight for the bluff bows of the nearest barge.

Before she could reach it came suddenly a loud splash from somewhere forward, and the voice of Jacinthe raised in an extremity of terror: "Help! Help! I am drowning! Save me!"

Maurice forgot all about his directions, forgot even that he could not swim a stroke. He rushed wildly forward along the narrow gangway that topped the bulwarks, slipped before he had covered half the distance, and fell with a mighty splashing full length into the green muddy water. Before he could come to the surface again, two strong young arms were round him and a familiar voice whispered in his ear: "Fear nothing. I

will hold you up," to be followed immediately by a scream more terrified than before, and then by the words: "Save me, my hero, I am sinking! My Maurice, my hero! Now that I am in your heroic arms I am no longer afraid. *Aie*, how strong you are! How boldly you swim!"

Just then a very large boat-hook, deftly wielded by the patron of the *Café of the Bold Navigators*, caught the tail of Maurice's coat, and the lovers were safely hauled on board amid the congratulations of everyone except M. Scaevola himself, who, having seized the abandoned tiller, had succeeded in avoiding a collision and bringing back the *Jacinthe* to her proper course.

Safe on deck, *Jacinthe* staggered forward, fell back upon the breast of her damp lover,

murmured in a clear voice, "My Maurice—my husband—I am thine for ever! No one shall part us now!" and so fainted very artistically away.

Her mother relieved Maurice of his burden and led her towards the cabin. "Little *comédienne*," she whispered chidingly, but at the same time with some of that affectionate interest with which a past master regards the success of a favoured pupil, "you have ruined your best dress for a whim." And then more gently: "Silly child, why did you not tell me that you wanted him so badly and thus save all this *toh-ho-ho*?" Catching the enigmatic little smile in *Jacinthe's* eyes, she said no more. After all, each generation understands its own methods best.



## LOVE, THE MUSICIAN.

**L**OVE'S a musician ever young,  
The notes he knows are few,  
And yet when he has played and sung,  
The world is born anew.

He may play low, he may play loud—  
None ever called the tune  
For one he played from the rare cloud  
Above the oak in June:

A song, a melody, a spell  
Of Merlin—all of these,  
And somewhat more. Ah, who can tell  
Aright love's mysteries?

Love's a musician ever young,  
Few are the notes he knows,  
But oh, when he has played and sung,  
The world is all one rose!

DOUGLAS AINSLIE.

# HER TWOPENNY KINGDOM

By G. B. STERN & GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

THE only other passenger in the first-class railway carriage of the train which ran south-east between Budapest and Trebstar was one very much to the liking of Richard Spurnville Carew. She might have been about sixty; she had an ugly, leathery face, creased with good humour round the eyes and mouth; her expression was at once shrewd and quizzical; her chin expressed determination; the carriage of her head, fine breeding. Moreover, her figure was ample, her clothes were sombre and expensive, and she was reading Anatole France. Finally, she and Carew both wanted the window open. Thus they were entirely affinities. With a contented sigh—for he had fought the Battle of the Windows so often between England and Hungary that he had no more spirit left in him to contest with his fellow-travellers the perils of an inch of fresh air—Carew sank back into his corner seat and began to read his newspaper. He was not a conventional man, and the paper was not *The Times*, sent out punctually from England. On the contrary, it was one of those comic mid-European newspapers which tell you all about those small but romantic kingdoms of which most have been wiped off the map after the Great War.

Suddenly Carew gave vent to a low but excited whoop of delight. His companion looked up inquiringly from "The Revolt of the Angels." "Will hear of something to his advantage?" she inquired in excellent English, but with a foreign accent.

He answered: "Do I look different from five minutes ago?"

"I did not look at you five minutes ago," lied the cheery old lady in the corner opposite him.

"Look at me now, then, madam. You behold," he exclaimed dramatically, smiting himself on the chest, "you behold that rare

being, 'a dreamer whose dreams came true.' All my life long," he went on, caressing the newspaper with its columns of burlesque mid-European politics, "all my life long I have wanted to play the heroic part in an authentic Ruritanian drama. I wanted to be the Young Englishman who enters the train at Dresden and alights haphazardly at Zenda; who finds the little capital in a state of ferment and revolution, and the pale slender young princess with red hair gazing anxiously round her for some chivalrous rescuer. Half the town is for Black Michael, of course, but we are not going to let the Royal Elphbergs be defeated without a struggle. The Young Englishman does not marry the princess; he leaves her happy with someone else. He goes away, crushing a red rose silently to his lips; that is really the part I am looking forward to. The rest is all made ready for me; the climax is preparing; the train is carrying me straight into it. Listen!" And he read aloud the following paragraph: "'During the past year the political atmosphere of Penomia has been more than usually restless. Once again the Princess Felicity, to the despair of the Penomian Loyalists, has played into the hands of the opposing party by mysteriously absenting herself for nearly two months without leaving any indication of her whereabouts. This is not the first time she has disappeared in this manner, but the latest result is a revolution which may well lead to the loss of her throne. The Philippine Penomians, with their inevitable slogan of "Up with the Salic Law!" have, it is said, triumphed over the supporters of the Princess, and have set up her cousin, the Archduke Philip, to rule over Penomia. Trebstar is, however, by no means quiet under this régime, and the constant eruptions of rioting and strikes lead us to believe that any return of the

Princess Felicity will cause an undesirable commotion in this part of the world—undesirable inasmuch as it may lead to outside interference from Hungary or Roumania, or possibly Jugo-Slavia, whose own internal affairs are at present—,” the Meddler broke off. “The next three columns and a half,” he said, “do not concern the handsome, romantic Young Englishman now being carried swiftly to aid in the cause of Princess Felicity and her crown.”

“And where,” asked the old lady with the white hair, leaning forward, deeply interested, “where is this princess of yours? She seems an irresponsible, harebrained young woman. Why isn’t she doing her duty towards her people?”

“The darling!” sighed the Meddler, in lovelorn accents. “She is—there is no doubt about it, for this is an old story to me; I have lived in Ruritania half of my dreaming life, and in Trebstar, the capital of Penomia—she is at the present moment tearing herself, pale and weeping, from the arms of her lover.”

The old lady chuckled jovially: “How scandalous!”

“Not at all, madam,” quoth the Meddler. “My lovely princess is as pure and steadfast as—as—” He halted for a simile.

“Junket?” suggested his companion.

“Junket wobbles! No, her only crime is to have loved secretly a man who is of no royal blood, and would not, therefore, be sanctioned as her consort. He was the playmate of her childhood; she would gladly have sacrificed the throne in order to marry him. From her brief holiday she is recalled violently to her duty. With her red hair gleaming in the sun, she gallops across the plains of Hungary—”

“Slush!” murmured his companion, in a voice so low that it hardly broke the trend of his inspired narrative.

“—only to find the usurper seated upon the throne, and her followers flying in disorder. But now enter the strong, silent Young Englishman who will lay his sword at the feet of Felicity. He will rally together her supporters, and, placing himself in the van—”

“Or in the cart,” suggested the irreverent old lady, her eyes twinkling.

Carew was too encompassed by his mirage to hear any suggestions. Already he was drowned in his selfless love for the slender, red-haired princess. “Having fought for her and the man she loves,” he

said in broken accents, “there is nothing left for him—is there?—but to go.”

He was so carried away that he rose, then and there in the railway carriage, and began to enact his own future exit.

“Young man,” remarked the robust old lady opposite him, “your imagination does you credit, but several of your details are wrong. For instance, *I* am the Princess Felicity.”

The Happy Meddler was silent, suffering from severe shock.

“As for the type of Englishman you describe,” she continued, thrusting her hands, male fashion, deep into the pockets of her severe tailor-made, “he exists only in the best tales of romantic adventure. I used to read them myself when I was young. Could you give me a cigarette?”

Richard Spurnville Carew was a man of courtesy and resource. The air with which he now placed at the disposal of the Princess Felicity of Penomia, not only his cigarette case, but his sword, his loyalty, and his life itself, could hardly have been bettered had she indeed been the young, slim, and adorable creature of his earlier inflamed imaginings. Liking him for this, she gripped his hand heartily.

“You’re not quite such a windbag as I thought. Do you sincerely want to meddle in this mix-up of mine?”

“Your Royal Highness,” protested the Happy Meddler with dignity, “it is not in my nature to meddle. However, I am sincerely of the belief that the Penomians cannot wisely exist without you to rule them.”

“I know they can’t, confound ’em!” rapped out the exasperated Princess. “That’s the very plague of it; I can exist all right without *them*. Do you hunt, Mr.—” She paused inquiringly.

“Rassendyl,” supplied the Meddler. “No, I mean Carew—Richard Spurnville Carew. Spurnville,” he explained, “is a corruption of the fine old Cromwellian name of Spurn-the-Devil. I am prepared to spurn the devil if he be the Archduke Philip himself!”

“Philip isn’t a devil; he’s a fool! And what a fool!” she groaned. It was evident that she was one of the ruthless autocrats who will gladly suffer anything but stupidity. “If only he had been a man of sense, he could have had Penomia with pleasure. They are absurdly out of date, these two-penny kingdoms—as out of date as the costume drama and tinsel stage regalia. I don’t know how we have survived. My

idea of real happiness," said the Princess Felicity, her bright, twinkling dark eyes for once wistful with unrealised longing, "my idea of *real* happiness is a clinking run with the Cottesmore, a nice windy day with just a spatter of rain, ground not too hard. I know some fields in the Shires that, if you put four of them together, would just about hold Penomia. Glory to Diana," she exclaimed, "the fences I've taken in my time, and the spills I've had!"

Carew threw himself back and shouted with laughter. "Do you actually mean to tell me that these mysterious disappearances of yours are accounted for by just a secret passion for hunting? How magnificent!"

"Well, not altogether," she confessed. "Frankly, I go to see my grandson, who is at Winborough. Quite a nice lad. He'll have a good seat one day, if I'm anything of a judge. Look here, under all your nonsensical babble of red hair and swords and the rest of it, you seem to me a fairly sensible man, so I don't mind telling you the truth. My daughter—my husband died, thank goodness, a couple of years after we were married; he didn't count for much, poor Ferdinand!—but my daughter was not unlike the heroine of your dream, white skin, red hair, sad mouth, very trying at the breakfast-table, but still, Penomia liked her and was proud of her. She was my only lawful heir, until she went and fell head over heels in love with a man of no royal blood whatever, an English hunting squire—in fact, a very pleasant fellow. I got on well with him afterwards, but at the time there was the devil to pay. She renounced her right of succession, married the man, and went to live in England. Trebstar, which is grotesquely mediæval in its traditions and conventions and other fascinating gadgets dating from about the period of the Second Crusade, insisted that its own royalty should cut off the rebel and hold no communication with her. I could have chucked up my crown then, but there was no one I could chuck it to, and Transylvania was pressing up a bit closely against us. Responsibility! Well, I don't believe in it, but I stick to it; that's the way I'm made. These ridiculous people who call themselves my loyal supporters rather rely on me; they have relied on me for nearly forty years, and I'm beginning to feel frayed and worn. The best times I have had have been playing truant. I used to go and see Nadia whenever I could escape, until she died; and now I go and see Tommy. Tommy and I

are the best of pals. I tip him well, don't ask him questions, and take an intelligent interest in Rugby football. If I could find a comfortable dower-house in Rutlandshire, settle there, and have him home for the holidays——"

"Why don't you?" laughed Carew, thoroughly fascinated by this incredible, unprincess-like princess.

"Because, my dear man, if Philip were left to himself, he would bring the country to ruin in less than six months, and I'd be to blame, for deserting. I'm not going to leave Philip in sole charge of my twopenny kingdom, and that's that! No, I detest bloodshed," she added, seeing the Meddler's hand linger in meditative fashion somewhere in the region of his left hip-pocket. "You might stop feeling for your revolver, and think of some peaceful method of getting rid of him. This is the twentieth century, you know"

"What's he like, this Philip of yours?"

With a good deal of relishing gusto and wit, she described him.

The Archduke Philip, it appeared, was, most comically, an Anglomaniac; comically, because he had never been to England, and had culled his ideas of that country from comic papers and from tourists' accounts of British farces of forty and fifty years ago. His worship of England showed itself mainly by wearing a fancy dress of loud and baggy checks, which he fondly imagined was the authentic sporting attire. Also he smoked enormous pipes, and wherever he went, a fabulous monster followed at his heels, which he called his "bull-dog." He spoke every language, even Penomian, with an "English accent," and he entertained with lavish hospitality and large quantities of underdone *rosbif*, with wedges of pale shoe-leather which he proudly called "Yorkshire pudding," any well-born Englishman who happened to be touring that part of the Continent.

"The man ought to be in an asylum, of course," concluded the Princess, in her brisk, incisive way; "but my unfortunate people, with their happy taste in selection, have placed him on the throne of Penomia, and instead of a really sensible woman like myself, mark you."

Into the eyes of the Happy Meddler had now crept that far-away expression, that visionary calm which always heralded what his ex-family called "one of his crack-brained ideas." Sometimes his ideas, when set in motion, would bring about the most

sublime results ; but his ex-family—and it was they, not he, who had constituted themselves “ex”—always steadily maintained that these results were an accident, and that Dick was a born mischief-maker. This was unfair. Dick was not a born mischief-maker, but his grandly kind impulses carried him a long, long way past discretion, past common-sense, past the land of Mind-Your-Own-Business. His twin stars were “luck” and “benevolence,” and no amount of spills had ever yet caused him to lose his temper, or to forbear from adjusting the fortunes of blundering humans whom he deemed incapable of looking after themselves.

And now, on hearing this account of the usurper Philip, he had an idea. He went and sat beside the Princess and, in conspiratorial whispers, laid before her his plan of action. When he had finished, she nodded approval.

“Good man! That ought to do it.”

“You’ll keep away in the meanwhile?”

“Yes, I can stay somewhere on the outskirts of the town.”

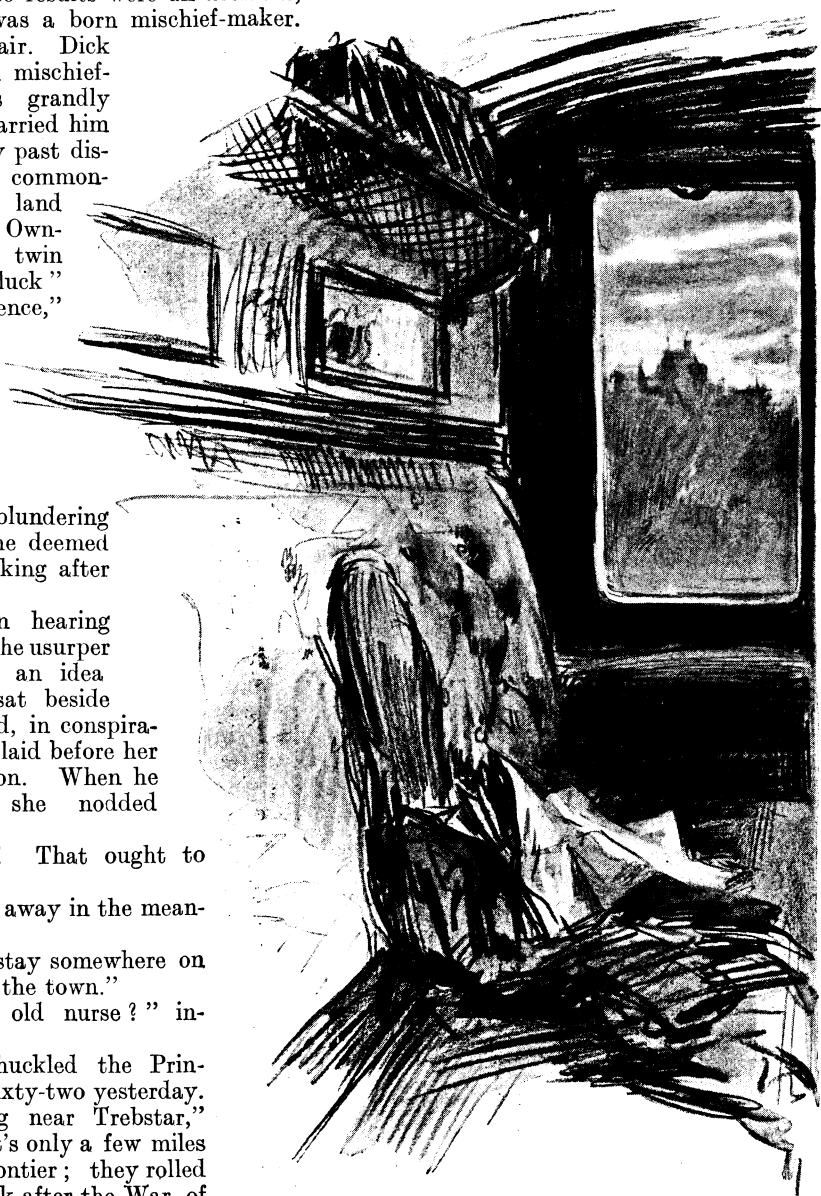
“With your old nurse?” inquired Carew.

“Hardly,” chuckled the Princess. “I was sixty-two yesterday. We are getting near Trebstar,” she added. “It’s only a few miles from the new frontier ; they rolled our frontier back after the War, of course.”

“Yes, but look here,” cried Carew, “how can we avoid some official who will recognise you at the frontier—Chief of the Customs, or something of that sort.”

The Princess smiled seraphically. “It happens to be with the Chief of the Customs that I propose to stay. Great pals of mine, he and his wife—charming couple.” She

opened the window and leaned out a little way. The copper domes and spires of Trebstar glittered green in the late rays of



the sun. When she drew back into the compartment, there lay, for the first time that afternoon, a shadow athwart her face. “I’m not sentimental,” she remarked, “but I must own to feelings of the deepest melancholy on coming home and seeing over the Royal Palace the flag which shows that I already *am* at home.”

"I'm not sentimental, either," asserted the Meddler (and thereby he lied), "but before we arrive I should like to make a

hand to his lips. When he rose again, though his eyes still mocked the romantic gesture, his voice was grave. "I spouted like a fifth-



"Whimsically he dropped on to one knee in front of her and raised her hand to his lips."

declaration." Whimsically he dropped on to one knee in front of her and raised her

rate barnstomer, Princess, when I first read that paragraph in the paper. The crimson rose, and the last mournful strains of the waltz, the strong silent Young Englishman, and the pale slender princess with hair like flame—they can all go on the



rubbish heap! Anyway, that princess was—cardboard! Most of our dream figures are. I don't want her; you are worth a hundred of her. My sword is at your disposal, Princess Felicity, and—and I'll do my best. This isn't just rhetoric, you know."

She smiled back at him in sunny comradeship. "It is," she retorted, "but I see you can't help yourself. Anyway, I like you. We'll get a bit of fox-hunting together in the autumn, if we are lucky."

\* \* \* \* \*

It did not take Carew long to become acquainted with the ruler of Penomia. Philip, undoubtedly a prize fool, was already becoming tied up in his futile but dogged attempts to introduce English laws and customs to his subjects; and he regarded the advent of this highly intelligent, well-bred Englishman as a sign from heaven to continue them. Carew was unstinting in his advice, and had Philip been less absorbed with his experiments, he must have thought the English a strangely patient, long-suffering race to have put up with such eccentric tyranny in legislation as Carew assured him they had been accustomed to since the days of good King John. But the Penomians, who had never been noted for their docility, began to grow more and more restive under the strain of their new ruler's Anglo-innovations. Carew waited until practically any measures introduced by the Archduke Philip would undoubtedly prove unpopular to the verge of riot and rebellion, and then began to talk to his host about Complete Prohibition, which was, according to his description, the most typically English law that had yet been passed. There were terrific penalties for disobedience. "That," asserted the Meddler firmly, "is the British way of enforcing order and control. Extreme severity at the start, you know; yes, that is the English way. You won't find a single drop of wine or spirits being drunk in England now at any time of the day or night. Lemonade, barley water, sherbet, liquorice cordial, those are the favourite beverages of the British workman. We are advancing by leaps and bounds, outstripping all other countries. It is a splendid sign—*tout ce qu'il y a de plus Anglais!* It is a pity," added our thoughtful Meddler, "that you are not the Absolute IT in Penomia. You wouldn't dare bring in Complete Prohibition, of course; the people would never stand it. But the English realise by now that any law once pronounced by their ruler, with or

without the consent of the Council, is immediately adopted. Any dissenting voice is put to death," quoth Carew airily. "But your Penomian methods are so modern. We English are old-fashioned, you see; we believe in the autocracy of one. You'll see for yourself, if ever you come to England."

He wondered if he had rubbed it in too insistently, and how often he had used the words "England" and "English" during the last speech. But the Archduke Philip of Penomia, as the Princess had truly said, was one of the world's prize fools. None but a prize fool would have attempted to introduce, even with the utmost diffidence and hesitation, even a state of partial Prohibition in Penomia, a wine-growing country which prided itself, above all other things, on the excellence and cheapness of its local wines, and, in particular, of the famous mellow brand of Golden Carlowitz.

Philip issued his edict.

And Carew waited breathlessly, until the Penomians should be heard shouting for the return of the Princess Felicity, who heartily enjoyed a bottle of wine with her meal.

"I am a clever man," quoth the Happy Meddler, conversing with his image in the looking-glass, "I am a brilliantly clever man. What other brain could have plotted this change in the monarchy of Penomia so subtly and without bloodshed? I will be decorated with the Royal Penomian Order of the Scarlet Vine, and I will wear it with evening dress, not in miniature, but life-size, when orders are worn."

\* \* \* \* \*

Carew had been now for about a fortnight with his finger contentedly thrust in the Penomian pie, when he found himself one evening seated with Penomia's Royalty at a little table in a corner of the Café Drungli, in the centre of Trebstar's liveliest square. Up till now his Ruritanian drama had not taken on a very conventional aspect, but at the present moment, he reflected with satisfaction, he might well be sitting in the foreground of Act II. in a Viennese musical comedy or comic opera of about fifteen years ago. Most of the population of Trebstar seemed to have congregated that night in the Café Drungli, and there were frequent loud bursts of dissatisfaction, and throbs of conspiracy, interlaced with snatches of scornful laughter. "Very excellent crowd-work by the supers," reflected a complacent Carew, in his capacity as critic.

The proprietor of the *café*, Ulrich Drungli, sauntered from table to table, dropping

here a familiar joke and there a significant phrase. He was the great-grandson of the original owner of the *café*, and, as such, one of the most famous characters in Trebstar. Nothing seemingly could be done without Ulrich Drungli, and it was rumoured that Ulrich had been mightily offended by Philip's asinine order of Complete Prohibition, and was, in fact, ignoring it with hardly so much as a wink of apology to the officers of the law. There was going to be trouble over Ulrich, now that he had withdrawn his support from the Philippine Party. That was why this evening Carew had suggested that he and his companion, in the style of a Grand Vizier and Haroun-al-Raschid, should take a stroll that way and drink a cup of coffee, or sip, maybe, a glass of peppermint syrup, in the *Café Drungli*, and lay a finger on the nation's pulse.

Philip was not exactly in disguise, nor was he exactly present in the character of the ruler of Penomia; but he affected a rather foolish compromise between the two by turning up the collar of his great-coat, pulling down the brim of his hat, and speaking in a voice which was not his own. His Dundreary whiskers, however, would have given him away anywhere—whiskers copied from an English farce that a friend of his grandfather's had once described to him, which he absurdly imagined were still being worn in that delectable island. Across his middle was a heavy Albert watch-chain, but the rest of him was irreproachable in a plus-fours suit. Anyhow, it scarcely mattered much if he were disguised or not, because everybody at the *Café Drungli* knew him, and nobody was taking any notice of him.

The lights were flickering badly, and the smoke was thick, which added to the atmosphere of tension. The Happy Meddler was convinced that a climax was pressing close upon them, perhaps the solution and end of his campaign on behalf of Princess Felicity. The strange wailing music from the little Tzigane band at the far end of the *café* may have had something to do with his sudden excitement. Anything may happen when a Tzigane ripples his bow across his fiddle-strings.

The central space of the *café* was occupied by a larger table, at which some dozen youths, the gay young rakes of Trebstar, were celebrating the birthday of one of their number.

"I'm not going to have my health drunk in barley-water!" this lad shouted. He

was more than a little drunk, for he had already dined privately, and the cellars of Trebstar had not yet given out. "Herr Ulrich, bring us half a dozen bottles of Golden Carlowitz, and charge them to me."

The Archduke sprang to his feet, but Carew laid a warning hand on his arm. "Wait!" he whispered. "See what Drungli does."

By now the walls were echoing with clamorous shouts for wine, shouts for Golden Carlowitz, for brandy, and for Sliwowitz. The revolt at the central table had evidently proved a cue for the other *habitués* of the *Café Drungli*. To the devil with Prohibition! Coffee-cups were smashed, and full glasses of barley-water and lemonade were shattered on the floor, and ran their contents in rivulets among the stamping, shuffling feet. *Café Drungli* was in an uproar. The people of Penomia were shouting for Penomian wine.

And then came a pause as though a cool hand had been laid on chaos. All eyes were turned, not on Philip, who had been more than partially forgotten, but on Drungli himself. What was he going to do? Every mob needs a leader, and this fierce but genial old man, with his great white fan-shaped beard, was the right leader for their mood. If he consented now, in the presence of the Archduke, to yield to the Law of Prohibition, if he refused to bring forth that wine—well, they would grumble, swear, perhaps, but they would settle down again to obey the royal edict.

Drungli quietly turned and walked through the door at the back of the *café*. For several minutes nobody spoke or moved; they watched for his re-entrance. Then he returned.

"Mighty Silenus!" muttered Carew, with a gasp of relief. For Drungli held two bottles of Golden Carlowitz in one hand, three in the other, and one under each arm. He was followed by his two sons and his daughter, and they were all carrying bottles of Golden Carlowitz; it was a defiant, triumphal procession, and a mighty cheer greeted it.

The Happy Meddler removed his restraining hand from Philip's arm. The reigning monarch of Penomia was a prize fool and a pompous ass, but he was no coward. He pushed his way into the centre of the *café* and confronted Drungli.

"I will have no intoxicating drink whatever in Penomia!" he stuttered angrily.

"You will have your licence taken away, and you will be fined. From now onwards the Café Drungli is closed!"

The old proprietor laughed. "Good! And I will have no Prohibition in Penomia. It does not suit me, and it does not suit your people. For three hundred years we have been vine-growers, and have drunk our own wine, and we have no need to copy the English. An Englishman was behind you when you made this law!" Meanwhile Drungli's two sons and his daughter were gliding and slipping hither and thither, from one table to another, filling the glasses and popping the corks. And Ulrich's scornful speech was accompanied by the merry clink of glasses, as his health was drunk by flushed and approving Penomians. "In England, we have been told, people are meek, and are willing to have laws thrust upon them without their consent. In England it may be true that cellars have all been emptied, and that Prohibition is a banner and an inspiration, but to our——"

"*It's all a pack of jolly old lies!*" a boyish voice interrupted him, clearly, amazingly, emphatically. Carew swung round in that direction, and saw what was undoubtedly an English schoolboy, aged about fourteen, with a snub nose and freckled face, rumpled hair, and a pair of honest eyes that were now sparkling in honest anger. Dazed by this irrelevant spectacle, Carew passed his hand across his brow and wondered if it were really all happening, or if he had suddenly fallen asleep over his peppermint cordial, and was dreaming a dream of Eton, Harrow, and Rugby, right into the middle of the occurrences at the Café Drungli. What added to the bizarre unreality of the incident was that this impertinent urchin had shouted his contradiction, not in English, but in tolerably good Penomian.

"*It's all a pack of jolly old lies!*" he repeated, and sprang on to a chair, so that his words might be audible to everyone in the café. "I tell you, I'm English, and I know someone has been stuffing you up—for a joke, I wouldn't mind betting! There's no Prohibition in England—never has been. And of course they can't spring a law without asking Parliament and everybody first. And as for the English being meek and putting up with these things—well, you'd better all come over and see for yourselves. Fatheads! And you're the biggest fathead of the lot!" in parenthesis, to the Archduke Philip. "It was you who

started all these footling tales about England, wasn't it? I'll just thank you to keep your sticky tongue off my country!"

He jumped off his chair again, thrust his hands into his pockets, and began nonchalantly to whistle. Carew just caught the tune. It was "John Peel." He smiled, and—

"Look here, sonny," he called out, while the crowd were stunned into comparative silence by this unexpected interference in their well-staged riot, "who the dickens are you?"

"You want to know, do you?" retorted the schoolboy, still heated by his public defence of the English bull-dog qualities. "Well, I'll tell you, and I don't care who knows it." He glared at Carew, at Philip, and at Ulrich Drungli. "My name is Tommy Saville, and I'm in my second term at Winborough; but I ran away out here directly I heard there were going to be all sorts of larks and shindies and revolutions and things. I told Granny it wasn't likely I was going to stay away out of it all—not on your life!"

"Does your grandmother live here in Trebstar, then?" inquired Drungli impatiently.

"My grandmother is the Princess Felicity of Penomia"—sensation—"and she's staying with the Chief of the Customs at Muntler. If you ask my advice, the sooner you have her back on the throne, instead of that stuffed-up Guy Fawkes over there, the better for all of you. I'd like to try some of that wine—it looks top-hole!" Tommy added impudently, and held out his empty glass towards the proprietor of the café.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Trebstar-Budapest express had just left the frontiers of Penomia behind it, when a quaintly incongruous party of six staggered along the corridor in single file towards the dining-car. The procession began with Tommy Saville and ended with Richard Spurnville Carew; the rest of the party consisted of the Princess Felicity, late of Penomia; the Archduke Philip, also late of Penomia; the ex-chief of the Customs at Muntler and his wife. The first five ranged themselves round the dinner-table, for the stationmaster had given orders that even exiled Royalty were to be treated with respect; and the Happy Meddler distinctly heard Philip's question "What shall we drink?" and the Princess's decisive answer, accompanied by her jovial, full-bodied

chuckle: "I don't know about the rest of you; a bottle of 1904 Golden Carlowitz for me!"

"Not bad stuff," agreed Tommy.

But Carew lingered behind in the corridor for a moment, opened the window, and leant out.

Trebstar, with its spires and domes of green copper, looked like a magic city. In this twilight misty hour, when all its thousand lights were lit along the river banks, and the sky was still pale primrose and apple-green behind the burnished roofs, he could not help feeling that his exit from that funny, sorrowful, exciting little kingdom of his dreams was being rather too unconventional. For he had fully meant to leave Princess Felicity, by dint of his loyal service and faithful right hand, firmly established on her throne. Yet here she was in the dining-car, on her way to England, perfectly content, ordering her favourite wine, and not even pausing, like himself, to lean out of the window for a last wistful gaze at the country which had exiled her, a last sentimental leave-taking, though he recognised that Princess Felicity was not one for last, long, wistful gazes.

He had meant, furthermore, to have discovered the one great romance of his life and heroically to have turned his back on it. But there was no red rose, no poignant, far-away strains of a waltz, at the close of this dream. He had found, indeed, not romance, but a couple of hearty and excellent friends in an old lady and a small boy, combined with the promise of a season's good hunting in the autumn.

"Mind you come; I can give you a mount," the Princess had said. "You've done me a good turn over this!" For the Happy Meddler's plan to topple Philip off his throne had succeeded, though not quite in the way he expected.

Penomia, after the scene in the Café Drungli, had revolted against Philip, but had also revolted against the return of the Princess Felicity. For Tommy had all too confidently let the cat out of the bag. All these years she had been hoodwinking them, bluffing them, with her visits to her daughter in England and to her daughter's son, that renegade family of hers whom they had demanded should be entirely cut off from Penomia. So she, too, might well have eccentric English ideas. They had not

decided yet, amidst all the lies and counter-lies floating about, who was telling the truth. They had, indeed, decided only on two things—that they would have no more Prohibition, and that they would be made fools of no longer—not by woman, man, nor boy.

The Chief of the Customs and his wife, who had harboured the Princess and said nothing during the fortnight while the Meddler floated his scheme for her restoration, were likewise exiled and told never to return. And the Penomians, led by Ulrich Drungli, had chosen for their ruler a second cousin of the Princess, the Archduke Paul, a sensible, middle-aged man who had hitherto not bothered himself much with affairs of State. He could be trusted to do well enough by his country in the future. "And a very good plan, too," declared the Princess, when the fatal news was brought to her. "I've always liked Paul. Now I can go with a quiet mind and end up my days in England, as I've always wanted to." And she and the Chief of the Customs, who knew a fair amount about horses, began at once to discuss with feverish absorption the important question of the best blood to get for the studding of their stable.

Philip, owing nobody a grudge, declared his intention of visiting England to see for himself that land of which he had entertained as many illusions as Carew had of Penomia. But Carew and Tommy had already planned to lose him at Victoria Station.

Tommy, wholly unrepentant at having "dished the whole caboodle" by running away from school to join his grandmother, was inclined to be elated at the part he had played in Penomian political intrigue. "You could almost say, couldn't you, Dick, that I've led a revolution? Or have I smashed one?"

"Wonder if they'll take you back at Winborough?" was Carew's unfailing response, and Tommy's swagger gave way to uneasiness.

The train gathered speed. With a shrug of the shoulders that was half angry and half amused, the Happy Meddler drew back and closed the window. Trebstar disappeared in the gathering dusk; a cold wind blew across the velvety plum-coloured plains. The day of twopenny kingdoms was nearly over.

*Another story from the career of "The Happy Meddler" will appear in the next number.*



## THE THAMES IN JUNE

**T**HE Thames in June! One's fancies fly  
To where his azure waters stray  
'Mid odours, borne on zephyrs' sigh,  
Of meadowsweet and new-mown hay;  
Yet not for these I tune my lay,  
But waters of a dingier hue  
That back and forth his tides obey  
'Twixt Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo.

Belted in light about him lie  
Wharves, chimneys, spires; their brown and grey,  
Changed by the sun's bright alchemy,  
A thousand varying tints display;  
And there enchanted by the fay  
Of laughing June, his barges, too,  
Float on the tide like galleons gay  
'Twixt Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo.

When, softly stealing from the sky,  
Falls on his waves the sun's last ray,  
Lo, as of old, the angels ply  
Their traffic on the glittering way;  
And twinkling lights, when dies the day,  
With shafts of gold his waters strew,  
That on the quivering darkness play,  
'Twixt Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo.

### ENVOY.

Old Thames in June since I must stay  
In London town, this part of you  
Shall be my refuge, come what may,  
'Twixt Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo.

ARTHUR H. STREETEN.

# GOLF FOR LATE BEGINNERS

## THE DANGERS OF OVER-SWINGING AND THE ADVANTAGES OF A SHORT SWING

By SANDY HERD

*In a Chat with Clyde Foster*

*Photographs by Percy G. Luck, for which Sandy Herd himself has posed to illustrate the main points of this article*

THE title of this article was suggested to me in a letter from a stranger who said he started golf in the forties.

"I am in the fifties now, like yourself, Sandy, but whereas you are reputed to play as well as ever, I seem to be getting worse. What can you do for me?"

If my correspondent should read this article, he will find in it some attempts on my part to help him. Without beating about the bush, I should like to say right away that one of the greatest obstacles to progress in the game of golf on the part of men who took it up comparatively late in life is over-swinging.

It may be a laudable ambition on their part to imitate the best golfers, who generally take pretty full swings, but it should not be forgotten that men who are in the front rank among golfers to-day, whether amateur or professional, have in almost every case—in fact, I think I might say in every case—started the game before they had done growing.

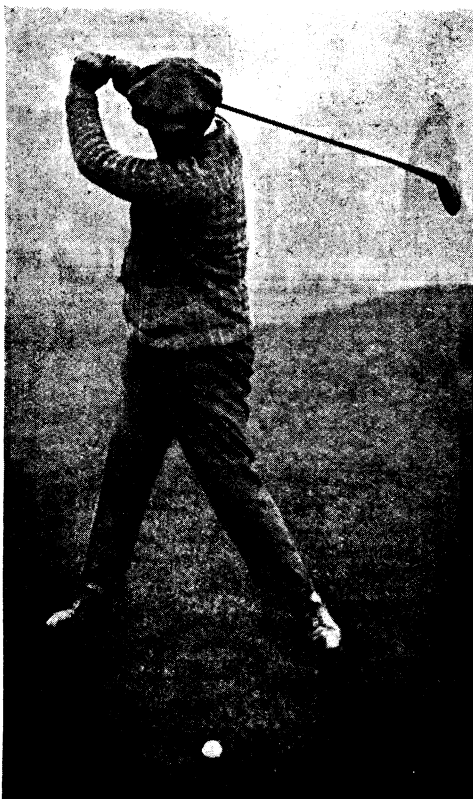
They scarcely needed any tuition beyond absorbing the principles of the game by playing in good company.

I suppose I am a full swinger. But I do not bother my head about the matter. It would not seriously concern me if unconsciously I should find that my swing had shortened by five or six inches.

I could name several leading golfers whose natural swing falls short of what we call a full swing. J. H. Taylor is a case in point. If you will watch him it will be seen that his club-head does not quite dip directly towards the ground at the top of the swing. James Braid may also be mentioned. Mr. H. H. Hilton, Mr. John Ball and Mr. Laidlay are other three examples that come to my mind; and it would be hard to name among the young amateurs of to-day any three who could have beaten

them in the heyday of their youth.

There is no more distressing picture in golf than that of a man of mature years



THE OVER-SWING—TO BE AVOIDED.

*Notice how the club-head is dipping below the horizontal, and that the hands are too high.*



THE RIGHT POSITION AT TOP OF SWING.

striving to swing, say, like Mr. Wethered or Mr. Tolley. It is asking too much of a late beginner that he should model his style on such lissom young athletes as these two amateur champions.

I read in the papers recently a statement by a doctor that golf was not good for the nerves. He was, I suppose, thinking of the miseries experienced when the game is badly played, when nothing happens the right way and nearly every shot is defective.

On the other hand, it is my firm belief that no game in the world is more calculated to bring health to its followers than golf. But I attach the condition that it must be golf—not necessarily great or brilliant golf, but real golf within the player's limitations.

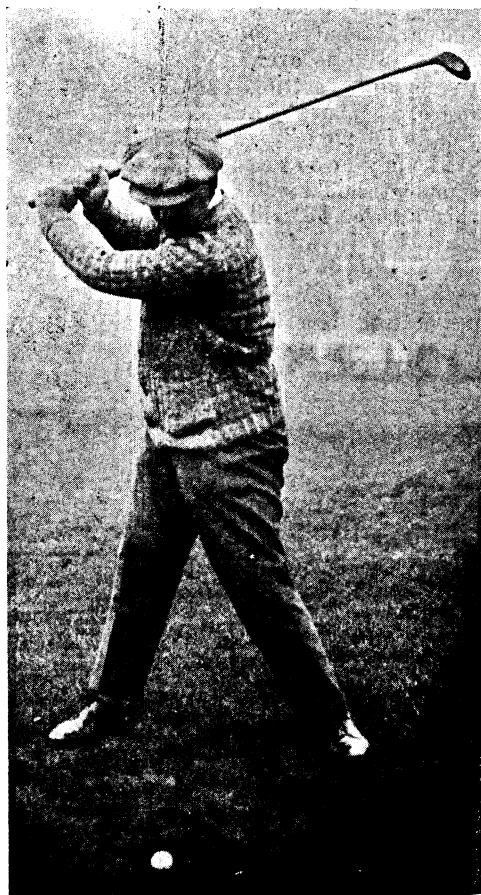
Suppose I introduce here an imaginary pupil who shall be typical of the "late beginner" who wants to play golf for the fun of it and in the hope that it will do him good. Do you think I should be so stupid as to make myself a model for that man and tell him to play as I play?

No, on the contrary, I should lead him by easy stages and probably stop him at a three-quarter swing, because I should know that that would be the surest way to make golf a pleasure by enabling him to drive a straight ball with a well-timed flick of the wrists.

The danger of a full swing is that it would throw my imaginary pupil off his balance and very likely put him out of temper as well.

I did not set out with the idea of saying anything about late beginners among women, but let me throw out the hint to them here that a great many stop their progress by swinging too far back.

It would be infinitely better if the great majority of women would adopt a short, sweet swing. They would drive quite as far and would keep the fairway very much oftener. And everything depends upon that.



THE UPWARD SWING FINISH I RECOMMEND FOR THE OVER-FORTY GOLFER.



Neither man nor woman can hope to reduce his or her handicap by driving long balls into the rough on either side of the course. Don't be afraid to adopt a shorter swing.

Your golf will be quite as graceful then, much more pleasurable, and much more effective.

Take my hint, and I am sure you will profit by it. I am old enough hand at the game to be worth listening to.

A round of golf is a long journey. The player should see that from start to finish he takes as little out of himself as possible. He should be refreshed as he goes along. Unless this is so, he is certain to crack up long before the end.

A three-quarter swing makes golf com-



THE STANCE AS IT SHOULD BE.

*Never mind the straight left arm; be easy, don't stiffen either legs or arms. The right arm should be straight in addressing the ball, not the left*



POSITION FOR AN UPRIGHT SWING.

*This stance is more upright, the hands are higher, and the body is straighter.*

paratively easy. It is not so liable, as the full swing, to throw the "late beginner" off his balance.

You can stand at various parts of a course, during an ordinary club competition, and see men with double-figure handicaps straining in the most ridiculous fashion to drive to the back o' beyond.

I say to myself on these occasions: "If only that fellow would stand less rigidly and content himself with a shorter back swing, he would play infinitely better, and possibly drive quite as far, if not farther,



certainly farther on the average, for his long swinging is responsible for duffing and otherwise botching his tee shots."

The late beginner must be frank with himself. He cannot hope—except in the rarest cases—to play as well as, it might be,



POSITION OF LEFT ARM UPON UPWARD SWING.

*Note also leg movement and position of head.*

his own son. One thing is certain—that he will act very foolishly if he tries to take such a full swing as Jones Junior.

I do not want to discourage the late beginner, and I hope he is not taking it into his head that there is no chance of his

getting down to single figures or to scratch. I place no such limits before him.

But I most emphatically impress upon him that he is going the wrong way to reduce his handicap if he is swinging the club round his neck after the manner of a young and supple player. We cannot monkey with Nature, and still less with golf, for there is no more jealous game in the world and no more generous game, if we pay proper respect to it.

It stands to reason that no shot, whether with wood or iron, can be well played unless a perfect control of the club is maintained.

Nothing but disaster can result from that condition of mind which leaves the player in the act of making a shot wondering where the club-head is, when and how it is coming to the ball, and, of course, wondering all the time what the shot is going to be like, probably wishing that it were all over.

That is no sort of golf at all. The proper frame of mind in addressing the ball, whether on the tee with the driver, or at any other part of the course with any other club, is to know what you are doing, how you are doing it, and to feel perfectly certain that the shot is going to give you a very pleasant sensation when you come to survey it.

There is no greater enemy, in your case, to the mental condition I am describing, than throwing your club so far back that you cannot visualise the line by which it will descend.

Have you never noticed how often, in the case of a very long back swing, the average golfer hurries his club forward again, knowing all the time that he is pulling it instead of letting it come down almost of its own accord, leading all the way nice and smoothly?

What is it that causes this flutter at the top of a long swing as the club is started on its downward way? What is it?

Why, of course, the reason is that the player has lost the club-head, and he is very doubtful how it is coming back again. Now, suppose he contents himself with the three-quarter swing, when he can almost see the club-head out of the corner of his right eye, he is then in a much safer and much more business-like position.

He is not going to waste energy up in the air, where so much energy is very often wasted. He has just got the club sufficiently far back to deal the necessary blow at the ball. Perhaps I should not use the word "blow," but you must understand that I really mean that the ball is struck with a swift rhythmic flick.

When the club-head has come down till it is about three or four feet from the ball, that is the time, and the only time, to think about hitting.

It is then that the club is gathering the necessary speed to impart the flick to which I have referred. The three-quarter swing is plenty long enough to guarantee a fine straight drive, so long as all the other rudimentary conditions have been fulfilled.

Now let me tell you as plainly as possible exactly how this three-quarter swing should be made, because I should feel that I had left my task only half done if I told you what to do without telling you how to do it.

Believe me, it is the easiest thing in the world if only you will think so. But if I were advising a full swing—which you can take on some other day if you feel like it—I should know that I was asking you to adopt one of the most difficult methods of



THE FOLLOW ON: POSITION OF HANDS AFTER IMPACT.

*Note the straight follow through of the right arm.*



POSITION OF HANDS UPON IMPACT.

*Note the right hand turning over the left.*

playing golf, so far as late beginners are concerned.

And I am quite sure that thousands of golfers, who might not call themselves late beginners, would be all the better by contenting themselves with a shorter swing. It is always a most excellent plan, when one is off his game, to shorten the swing a little as a means of coming back to form.

Stand firm and, above all, stand easy. Don't stiffen the legs and arms like a cast-iron being. Let your knees and wrists serve their natural purposes. Take the club back with a fairly straight, but not stiff, left arm, keeping the head comfortably still. Over-swinging is caused very often by over-pivoting—that is, turning the body too much round on the back swing. Pivoting must not be overdone.

When the club-head has gone far enough to enable you, as the body twists, to rub the left shoulder slightly with the chin, you may rest satisfied that the club-head has gone quite far enough back. That is about what I call the three-quarter swing.

It will occur to you at once that to drop the club any further, in the case of a late beginner, is only needlessly adding to the margin of danger. You have all the further to bring it for the downward journey, when the chances are you will sway forward and

draw the arms so close to the body that the drive will be a very poor thing indeed—a hunch rather than a drive.

Now you have reached the top of the three-quarter swing without consciously over-exerting yourself. There is quite a pleasant expression on your face in contrast to the worried expression that would be there in the case of a long swing.

You are in a fine striking position, and very little, if any, doubt has entered your mind regarding the shot, because you know that the club is under your control.

In leaving the top of a swing, be careful not to pull the arms in. It is even better to throw them out a little, but, best of all, to come down perfectly naturally.

You will find yourself firmly planted on the right foot, as the left knee has bent a little and the left heel risen slightly off the ground. Don't worry about the left heel. It will do all right by you, so long as you maintain the comfortable position I have indicated.

What I want to do, above everything, is to inspire you with confidence—to make you feel that you are playing a game in the way it should be played, and that, in the case of a late beginner, it is a wonderfully easy game to play quite well very soon.

Well, now, the club-head comes down without any jumping, or straining, or swaying, or guessing, or doubting. When about three feet from the ball, you will feel the natural increase of speed.

There is no need to push speed into the swing. There is no possibility of pushing speed into the swing. Speed can only come into the swing by the wrists, elbows, and knees remaining in a pliant state, while the body, that has been turned round, comes back again as the right shoulder follows through after the club-head.

The right hand, at the moment of the impact—at the exact moment of impact—must turn over the left hand, so that a foot or two past the place where the ball was, the whole of the back of the right hand is showing.

The right arm must be made to shoot out, but not jerkily, in the direction of the ball. Whether the swing finishes round the left shoulder or not, is a matter of no consequence whatever. You have done with the ball long ago.

The impetus will carry the club round some distance, but you need not concern yourself about that. Playing golf, not posing for it, is what we are talking about.

I have confined myself so far to the driver. But all golf shots, or nearly all golf shots, are regulated by the same principle; and if you can get this three-quarter drive as I should like to see you get it, one of the pleasantest imaginable results will follow. Your whole game will be improved, as you apply the shorter swing proportionately in the use of other clubs.

Of course it is possible to overdo short swings just as long swinging can be overdone. There is a scientific limit to everything. The short swing I am advocating is one that I know to be thoroughly sufficient and efficient.

It would not be possible to flick a golf ball away with a ridiculously short swing, but the three-quarter swing will be found to answer all requirements.

I invariably play it myself in wind, especially with a following wind, for the simple reason that I do not want the wind to play any pranks with the club at my back. In other words, I am then making sure of a good control over the shot.

I venture to go as far as to say that, although anything but a late beginner, I could yet adopt the swing that I am recommending without dropping many strokes. One never knows but I might play just as well with a short swing as with a full swing, though at my time of life, with nearly fifty years of golf behind me, it would hardly be worth while taking any liberties with my methods.

Late beginner, do as I tell you, not as I do. The game has no terrors for me. It will have very few for you if you adopt the three-quarter swing, and stick to it as long as you like.





"'I can't face those bills,' he gasped, 'with this money in my pocket, and her poor pale face!

# ST. AUGUSTINE'S LADDER

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

ONE spring afternoon Mr. Felix left his office at three to visit the Temple Flower Show. He had only two hobbies in his placid existence. The minor hobby was flowers. The major hobby, of course, was money. He called it "business," and perhaps he was right, for he did not spend a deal of the money when he had gained it.

His business was that of a "financial agent," the more reputable class of money-lender. The loans were mostly mortgages well secured upon real property, and

temporary advances to assist in winding up estates, or during the earlier stages of involved financial transactions of approved soundness. Upon occasions, however, he made advances to well-recommended clients upon their note of hand.

"Personal security," he sometimes told Stokes, his confidential clerk, "is sound security—if the person is!" He held, however, that the person usually wasn't. So he did not make this kind of advance frequently.

He did not think that young Dennis

Montague was very "sound." Indeed, he thought it necessary to defend his action to Stokes. He explained that the young man was the nephew of Martin Montague, with whom he did much business; that Dennis's pleasantness had often facilitated the business while he was with his uncle; that he might possibly succeed to the concern some day; and that he only wanted twenty-five pounds to square up a betting loss. Anyhow, the old man lent him the money at a quite reasonable rate of interest.

"I regard it as chargeable to *propaganda*," he told Stokes, when he heard that the young man had been cut off with a shilling by his uncle, and was going abroad. "Proceedings? No, no! His uncle would pay up to stop them, and mentally charge it to me. We must write off the five-and-twenty—and Master Dennis. We shan't see him here any more."

But he came that afternoon about five o'clock, just when Stokes was preparing to close down and hurry home to his invalid wife and child. They were Stokes's two hobbies.

"Where's the old man, Stokes?" Dennis asked. "I came to kiss his hand before I hop it to Australia. I'm off in the *Tartan* to-morrow morning."

"Mr. Felix has gone to the Temple Flower Show," Stokes said. "He takes an interest in flowers that you wouldn't expect. I'm his hand for the moment, if you've come to put anything in it." Stokes grinned.

"You think that's a joke, eh?" Montague suggested. "I *am* a bit of a joker, Stokes; practical joker. Have a fag? Now take hold of your chair before I startle you out of your wits. I've come to square up. I'm not sure whether it's a joke or isn't. Let's see what *you* think. Old Ironsides"—he meant Martin Montague, Esq.—"sent for me this morning. He gave me my passage money, and a trifle to get along with, some time back, and he said that my account with him was closed—nice red lines across. But this morning he forked out two hundred pounds, and a lecture. He said that was worth about ten thousand pounds, if I used it properly."

"Paying up your debts, eh?" said Stokes. "It's twenty-seven pounds thirteen and fourpence with interest to date."

"Do you keep all the accounts in your head?" Montague inquired.

"No. I worked it out while you were

in the waiting-room, on the off chance that you might be prepared to pay up."

"What an optimist you must be, Stokes! To fancy I'd pay! Well, the lecture wasn't about paying up debts. He said he spoke as representing my mother. He had been thinking out what she'd say to me if she were alive—a speculation I'd been rather avoiding. He keeps an old poetry book that was hers, it seems, by a chap named Longfellow. It appears there's a poem that she quoted to the old man, when he was a young rip, about some prosy old saint named Augustine. He says I narrowly escaped being misfitted with the name. He explained that the saintly gentleman invented a great stunt with a ladder. You made it out of your vices. I've got the material all right. The idea is to construct the rungs out of them. Tread 'em underfoot. Metaphorical, see? 'Men may rise on stepping-stones, Of their dead selves to better things.' Something like that it goes. The old man spluttered and grunted over it, so I can't swear to the exact words of the tosh; but I'm going to see if I can't go up a peg on that twenty-five pounds."

"Twenty-seven pounds thirteen and fourpence," Stokes corrected.

"I don't expect the old saint approved of interest," Montague demurred. "Have another fag? . . . They didn't in those days, you know—called it usury."

"It was a very reasonable rate of interest, under the circumstances," Stokes protested, with the credit of the firm at heart.

"Righto! I believe I'm going one better than a saint; but it shall be a twenty-seven pounds thirteen and fourpence rung. . . . I say, Stokes, my friend, I'm more likely to step higher off it if old Ironsides hears from your gov. that I came and squared up. Twig?"

"Ah!" said Stokes. "So *that's* why you're doing it."

He chuckled and rubbed his hands.

"I tell myself so, to spare my blushes," the scapegrace said; "but, as a matter of fact, I'm not sure that it *is* the reason. You see, the poor old mater would have jawed me into it if she'd been living. Good old sort, the mater. His making out that he was speaking for her was an artful stunt; rather did me in. I felt that she ought to have an innings. . . . No, I'm not exactly doing it for nunky to hear of, but, as I *am* doing it, I shouldn't mind if he heard. . . . You've got to work it,

Stokes. I've feed you with the secret of the ladder trick, and that, according to nunky, is worth ten thousand at least. . . . Here you are. Twenty-five pound notes, five ten bobs—no, six. Get a few fags with the odd money, old son. It's a lawyer's fee."

"Thanks," said Stokes.

He took the money, made out a receipt, signed it for Frederick Felix and Co., pp. H. Stokes, wished Montague luck, and saw him to the door. Then he came back and sat in his chair and stared at the wall. Presently he rose, and went and told the typist and the office boy that they could go. Then he sat in his chair again, and stared at the wall again; unbuttoned his coat to stop the pressure of his shabby pocket-book, reminding him of the money in it.

"If only I had the key of the safe and could lock it up and leave it here," he kept thinking, "I shouldn't mind so much; but to have to carry it home; to have twenty-seven pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence on me, besides my own few shillings; six shillings and eightpence and four shillings and twopence—no, three shillings and threepence. Lunch was eightpence and the tram will be threepence—nine shillings and elevenpence. To have all that money on me, and to see the corners of the bills sticking out from behind the clock, and the doctor's account to come. . . . 'Generous diet,' he said, and 'she ought to go to a bracing place for a month. Look at her face' . . . Merciful Heaven, don't I look at it! Rosy little face when I married her, and now. . . . Slow starvation, old clothes with no warmth in them. That's what's the matter with her. . . . If I took her in an armful of things—told her I'd had a bonus—I'd see her clap her hands again! She'd never suspect anything, and with good luck *he* wouldn't. Montague goes off to-morrow, and the governor doesn't dream of his paying, any more than I did. It's in Treasury notes that could never be traced. If I squared up the bills and had a fair start, a step-off—up the ladder of dishonesty! It can't be done. I'd best go home, or Lou will be worrying."

He rose, reached for his overcoat, shook his head, and sat down again.

"I can't face those bills," he gasped, "with this money in my pocket, and her poor pale face! The notes in my pocket-book will scream at me. 'I can save your wife,' they will shout. 'Save your wife and your son' . . . My son! . . . Make them into a thief's wife and a thief's son. . . . It can't

be done. Fancy Lou's face if the police came after me! I wouldn't care if I hadn't to take the blessed cash home. Well, I must, and I mustn't touch it. I wouldn't touch it, of course. . . . Well, I'll go."

He rose and went over to the coat peg again, shook his head, and returned to his chair once more.

"It's an even chance that he'd never find out if I borrowed the money," he muttered, "and ten to one that he wouldn't for several years, anyhow. I'd get Lou well, and the boy would get well with her. I'd get a rise or two; pay it back; make out that it came when he was on his holiday. He wouldn't trouble to trace the cheque. It would only be borrowing for a time in an emergency. That's a blackguard argument. It wouldn't be borrowing. It would be stealing, I know. It mustn't be done. . . . But what I've got to face is that, if I go home with that money in my pocket, and see those bills, and Lou looking washed out, holding by things as she crawls about to get my tea—the child crying, perhaps—I should do it—I should do it. There's only one way to keep my hands off that money. I mustn't take it home. I'll take it to the governor. That ought to put me a step up the saint's ladder! What blessed gup those poet chaps write! Honesty is just 'gup,' a fake kept up by those who have, to frighten off those who haven't from taking their fair share . . . *I'm* talking gup now, and don't believe a word of it. I'm going to walk a man's ladder; rise a step by treading underfoot this temptation. . . . And—suppose I leave behind my wife and child? They want things—*want things!*"

He sat down again in his overcoat, threw his hat on the desk, buried his face in his hands. He pictured himself self-righteously climbing a ladder, and his pale-faced wife and child, crying to him, holding out their arms. He had almost decided to borrow the money, and then there came a thought to him. "Lou" had her ladder to climb, too, was patiently climbing it all the time. *She* would have no hesitation in treading this temptation underfoot. She would starve or freeze rather than eat or wear anything bought with the money.

"What's the use of arguing, boy?" she would say. "It's stealing, and stealing is stealing."

That, he told himself, was really all that there was to be said. "It would be stealing, and I'm not a thief. I don't believe I *could*

make myself do it when it came to the point," he said; "but I won't risk the temptation; won't go through the misery of it. I'd lie awake all night arguing it over and over, especially if she had one of her coughing turns. I'll take the money to the old man and have done with it."

He buttoned up his coat and went out into the street, walking to Mr. Felix's flat to save two penny 'bus fares, which he could

windows were full of things that Lou needed, and that he couldn't buy for her. Even the savings for her new dress and his new suit had been spent during her illness. Several times he paused in front of a shop. Once he put a foot on the doorstep. "Real eiderdown, five feet by five feet, two pounds thirteen shillings and sixpence. Extraordinary bargain." Lou was always cold.

He got away from there by telling himself



"If you won't trust me after this, for Heaven's sake keep me on till I've found another crib! We've nothing but my screw to live on, sir, the three of us."

fairly charge to the office, and spend on acid drops for Lou. They eased her cough.

Out in the street he had to argue the matter over again. Every shop window thrust temptation before his eyes. "Fine fruity invalid port." "The 'Doctor' underwear for ladies. Saves more lives than physic." "Fowls ready for the table, from seven and sixpence." "A week in Sunny Seaby." "Beefo"—with a picture of a husband handing it to his convalescing wife. A washer, a wringer, a waterproof, an umbrella, a warm coat—all things that Lou wanted—tempted him in turn. The

that he'd be sure to be caught out, and then, if he didn't go to prison, he would lose his job, and Lou would be even worse off. He persuaded himself away from other windows by the same argument. He didn't really believe that he *would* be caught, but he told himself so to keep his hands off his employer's money. He wondered now and then why he was so averse from taking it. It wasn't from religion—Lou was religious, but *he* wasn't. It wasn't from fear. It wasn't because it seemed so very wrong. He didn't think he would greatly blame another man for doing it in his place. It wasn't from any regard or any great esteem

for his employer. His feelings towards Mr. Felix were lukewarm. He considered him an easy man to put up with, not very adgety, not very irritable, and less mean than many of his kind. He paid Stokes "four five" a week. Stokes thought

would arouse "the old flint's" suspicions; perhaps cause him to think of making a change. "He wouldn't study me," he told himself, "any more than I would study him if anything better came along; and he'd never miss the money. I shouldn't worry about *him*. It's only—only the sort of thing I can't do, and go on thinking anything of myself. Well, I'll be able to chortle that I've stepped up the ladder to-night. . . . Chortle! When I see Lou's face looking like chalk! I'm a good



"And so," Mr. Felix said, "I suppose you are in debt, eh?"

mind to turn back and chance it. . . Here's his bally place. I'll get it over before I change my mind."

"He walked into the Imperial Chambers; told the lift-boy "9 C"; was taken up to Mr. Felix's rooms; informed Mr. Felix's housekeeper that he was Mr. Felix's clerk and wanted to see the governor.

He was conducted along a soft-carpeted passage and shown into the best-furnished room which he had ever entered. He noted a silver basket full of peaches on the massive

that he earned about "five ten," but he knew that most of the men round about him were getting only "three ten." So he didn't complain of Felix; didn't dislike him; to an extent liked him, but didn't dream of asking him for an advance or a loan. The old man's first question to borrowers was "What security?" Stokes could give none, and the fact that he was hard up



carved sideboard (how Lou loved peaches !), and a decanter of generous-hued port (the doctor said "port would do her good"). His employer sat in one of those many-cushioned armchairs in which you sink a foot. (Lou said it was the first thing she would buy if ever they came into money.) Several lovely vases were loaded with choice flowers, no doubt brought home from the flower show. (Lou almost danced for joy even now when he took her home a few flowers.) There was a fire in the grate, although the weather was warm. (Lou always put on her coat in the evenings nowadays.) In short, Stokes thought bitterly, his employer had everything which his sickly wife needed and hadn't; and now he was bringing him money which he had no use for, and which might perhaps have saved Lou's life. He sometimes wonders whether, if he could have thought of any other excuse for his visit, he might not have carried the money away, after all.

"Ah, Stokes!" the old man said. "What's happened to bring you here? Are we in trouble?"

"It's nothing to trouble *you*, sir," Stokes said. "A bit unexpected and startling. Dennis Montague called and paid over what he owed—twenty-seven thirteen four with interest. You might have knocked me down with a feather. I thought how surprised you'd have been if you'd been there."

"Um-m-m!" said Mr. Felix. "Perhaps not so surprised as all that. His uncle 'phoned, just before I left, to say that he hoped he would come. If he didn't, *he* was going to pay."

Stokes gasped. So if he had taken the money he would have been caught out at once! Honesty was the best policy, after all!

"He—he came just before five," he said, feeling that he had better say something. The old man seemed to be watching him.

"Just before five, eh? Do you think he paid it merely to get back in his uncle's favour? Or from honesty?" His uncle will want my opinion on that."

"I think," Stokes said, "he did it because he thought his mother would have wished it. He said that Mr. Montague talked to him about some verses that his mother was fond of—St. Augustine's Ladder. The verses seemed to have made an impression on him, though he hardly liked to own it. I dare say you know them? Longfellow."

"Yes, yes. Will you have anything to drink, Stokes?"

"No, thank you, sir. My wife will be worrying over my being late. She's an invalid—just lately."

"Oh, you're married, eh? You needn't have troubled to come round to tell me. You could have 'phoned if you thought the matter sufficiently important."

"I came to bring the money, sir," Stokes explained. "You see, I hadn't the key of the safe."

He took out the pocket-book.

"Man alive," Mr. Felix cried, "why couldn't you keep it till the morning?"

"It might have looked as if I was running off with it," Stokes said.

"What?" The old man stared at him. "Run off with twenty-seven pounds? Why, hundreds pass through your hands in cash, apart from cheques! Why should you be suspected of wishing to retain this particular amount?"

"Well," Stokes said, "I—of course I should have paid it in to-morrow morning, but—suppose anything happened to me. It was money paid over by a man who's off abroad to-morrow morning, in Treasury notes, which I knew you didn't expect to come in. I didn't know that his uncle had mentioned to you that he was likely to pay, you see, sir."

"I see that. I don't see why anyone should suspect that you would take the money. I had a good character with you. I was prepared to give you one. I don't quite like this business, Stokes."

"Sir, I've brought you the money. Here it is. What more could I do?"

"Paid in before five, you said. It is now six-thirty-five. Was there—is there any special reason why people should think you might be tempted by un-earmarked cash? You mentioned an invalid wife just now."

"There's a child, too," Stokes said huskily. "He's sickly as well. I do all I can for them. It isn't enough. The doctor says they need all sorts of things that I can't give them. Yes, anyone might say that I had temptation enough. . . . Well, here's the money, sir."

"Ah-h-h!" said Mr. Felix. "You've been making a St. Augustine's Ladder of it, eh? . . . A bit afraid of yourself, eh? . . . I must think this over."

"Sir," Stokes implored, "I've brought it all right. I don't say I wasn't afraid of being tempted if I took it home. . . . Sir, my

wife and the child. . . . She's no colour left, sir, and she was such a bright little thing when we got married. Sometimes she holds on to the furniture to get about the room. The boy's not doing well, either. He's ten months. . . . Sir, I am an honest man. I've brought the money. If you won't trust me after this, for Heaven's sake keep me on till I've found another crib! We've nothing but my screw to live on, sir, the three of us."

"And so," Mr. Felix said, "I suppose you are in debt, eh?"

"Only a few pounds, sir, and the doctor's bill when it comes. We go without everything we can. I kept off the temptation, sir, anyway. It seems that you don't give a man credit for making a—a Saint Augustine's Ladder of it. Before you think over firing me—"

Mr. Felix held up his hand.

"Tut tut!" he said. "I wasn't going to think about that. My trouble is this St. Augustine's Ladder business. . . . You'd better have a glass of whisky, Stokes, and a biscuit with it. The ladder business is upsetting, confoundedly upsetting. I like the idea in theory, you know, but *I* don't want to supply the vices that you tread down in practice; don't want you to feel covetous because of the needs of your family, eh? We can remedy that. You'd better put those notes back in your pocket. I gather that they'll square you up and do a few things for your wife."

"Sir!" Stokes gasped. "Sir! I'll certainly have no further temptation ever to touch anything of yours. It wouldn't be possible after this."

"Then," Mr. Felix said, "you are welcome to go on with the ladder business. I suppose you can find other vices for rungs, eh? What I have to consider is how far *I* can go in for it. It seems to me that I am rather short of the necessary vices. A little too fond of money, perhaps, eh? It's worse than a vice. It's a folly when you've no one to leave it to. What increase of salary, I wonder, should I have to give you

to put myself up a rung? . . . Ha, ha, ha! Funny notion! Funny notion! We'll consider the question further in the morning, Stokes. Meanwhile you'll want to get home to your wife. Just touch that bell. . . . Harris, fetch my largest handbag but one. You'd better take a couple of bottles of port for your wife, and some peaches. It's a funny notion, this ladder business. I remember that, at election times, my father used to stick two ladders on the wall, and Gladstone and Salisbury climbing them, a rung for each seat. . . . Ah, here's the bag! . . . How about some flowers? Does your wife like flowers?"

"Oh, sir!" Stokes cried. "Oh, sir! You're—you're—"

"Climbing my ladder," old Felix said. "Climbing my ladder. . . . The main idea is good, but I hope that St. Augustine was wrong about the method. I don't see that I can go very high on vices. I am not a very vicious man."

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Stokes, now restored in colour and spirits, says that the saint *was* wrong, "of course!"

"Saints," she pointed out the other evening, when Mr. Felix came in to supper, "weren't married, and a man only understands things properly when he has a wife and a child. Climbing on your wickedness, indeed! Why, it's only an excuse for being naughty! I expect he'd been a rip before he was a saint, and was trying to make the best of it. Anyhow, if *you* do dreadful things, Dick, it will be no use telling me that it's only to make a ladder of them!"

"You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick as usual, Lou," Stokes protested. "It's the bad things you *don't* do that make the ladder; but you can make very good rungs by doing good ones."

Mr. Felix, who had done some ordnance clerking during the War, nodded approval.

"That's the correct make," he said. "St. Augustine's Ladder, Mark II."





## LONDON NIGHT

ABOVE the London evening  
The sky's a flaming sapphire flower  
Shoaling to a green water spring,  
And a white moon and a hushed hour.

There's amber at the furthest rim,  
Orange and rose in a fused mist.  
The London crescent's cool and dim  
In veils of grey and amethyst.

The white hotel is starred with light,  
Lit windows glitter as the stars,  
And London lovers take the night—  
And she is Venus, he is Mars.

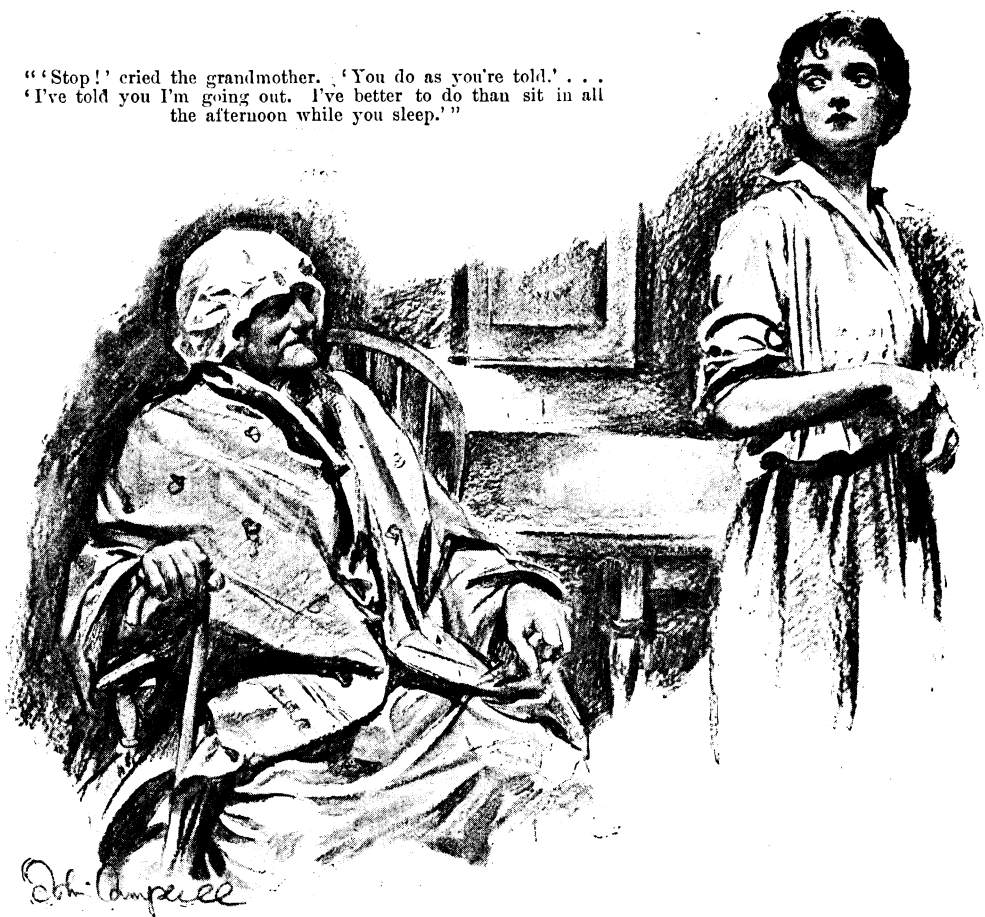
Betwixt the houses silver grey  
The road runs on, a dull lagoon—  
What lights upon the waterway?  
Oh, is it Venice at full moon?

Now by the jungle of the square  
Steals a small tiger, golden-eyed,  
And golden-eyed the night skies are,  
And gold-eyed chariots swiftly glide.

Enchanted London lies a dream  
'Twixt Summer day and Summer night,  
Down her long streets a golden gleam  
Of fireflies dancing in blue light.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

"'Stop!' cried the grandmother. 'You do as you're told.' . . .  
'I've told you I'm going out. I've better to do than sit in all  
the afternoon while you sleep.'"



# THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

By LEOPOLD SPERO

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

THE clock on the mantelpiece ticked away with maddening monotony. In her armchair the old lady dozed, and the girl with brown hair in curls about her white neck watched her anxiously. Then she rose, put her knitting aside, and stepped out of the tiny parlour straight into the road that wound between tumbling hedgerows and over the hillside away to the world beyond. In front of her she saw

the Kentish Weald, with its deep green valleys, its rich hillsides and lush meadows, where immemorial cottages and farmhouses, which had not changed for centuries, lay embedded in the arms of the fruitful summer.

The white clouds raced across the sky, chasing each other like children, leaping and playing to the tune of the vagrant breeze. The road was deserted by mankind, but all its length was loud with the call of birds.

From the farm near-by came the lowing of the cattle, the neighing of horses—sounds to bring peace to hearts shut in by the drab and dirty walls of great cities. But the girl bit her lips, and her eyes filled with tears. She turned and shook her fist at the cottage, and made as if to walk away. Then she hesitated.

"If I do, she'll wake up, the old cat!"

She tiptoed back and peered through the window into the shadows of the room. Her grandmother was still asleep, dozing in the contentment of selfish old age. She would take a walk down the road, to see who was about.

But who could be about in a dead-and-alive place like this? What was there to see but trees and woods and fields, blue sky and white clouds, what to hear but the cry of animals and birds that knew no other life than this? If there had only been a sparrow or two amongst them, just a little London sparrow to remind her of the life she loved—Walworth Road on a Saturday night in autumn, the stalls crowded high with fruit, over which the paraffin flares blazed malodorously; butchers' men calling their raucous boasts of what they had to sell, the cheap drapery and jewellery shops beckoning one inside, the Italian tea-shops and the gaudy cinemas. There you saw Life. There things were a little bit of all right. Things happened there, happened only less wonderfully than the promise on the placards outside the theatres to rejoice hungry eyes with tales of brave men, of bad, beautiful women, thrills never-ending, strange adventures week by week from secret places and far-off lands. And there was life in the streets themselves, if it was only a row outside a public-house. The newsboys brought swift tidings of a winner every half-hour, of a murder or a robbery, something real, something worth while. Not as good as the pictures, of course, but good enough. Four miles away in the little market town there was a picture house where one might go on rare occasions. But what was there to see? Love stories as old and out of date as Methuselah, films she had seen years ago. They knew nothing at all in the market town, so what could they know up at the village? Who was to know anything?

Grandma thought *she* knew everything. That was the trouble. Even now, if she woke, she would grumble that Elizabeth was not by her side to answer her rambling talk, which was of no interest to anybody,

but related at best the miserable tittle-tattle of their neighbours, or maybe what the curate had told her of some important function—a sewing meeting or a lantern lecture weeks ahead. That would be the rarest treat she held out to this little London sparrow, lost amid the hedgerows of the country.

The girl shook her fist at the cottage and all it contained. Her blue eyes flashed with anger, and every fibre in the lithe body trembled. A cow rose slowly and stared at her over the hedge, and she rushed across the road in a rage and tried to frighten it away with waving arms. The cow disappeared, mildly perturbed at this hostile demonstration on the part of an old friend. Elizabeth walked along till she came to the orchard gate, threw herself down full length in the shade of an apple tree, and pressed her face against the cool grass, so that the fevered cheeks might be soothed by its fingers. And so she slept a while, until a spot of rain, and then another and another, roused her and sent her scurrying home through the shower which followed.

The old lady was waiting to scold her. "Can't trust 'ee to sit by me a moment," she gabbled. "You be allus trapesin' round, here and there and everywhere. What girls is comin' to I don't know. Go you and get my tea, and find some work for them idle hands 'fore Satan catches them. Hurry, now!"

The girl went into the tiny kitchen and set about preparations, putting the great kettle on the fire, cutting white bread plastered with yellow butter, and the remnants of the big cake which lurked in the dark cupboard. She went about her work with a furious energy which only anger could have supplied. What a life! And what a tea! No shrimps, not even a kipper! Just bread-and-butter and tea and an old plum cake. And even if the tea had been an affair of more interest, what was the good of it when there was no one to share it but the old cat yonder, nodding in her arm-chair by the window, complaining that her own flesh and blood wouldn't talk to her, though her victuals was in their mouths?

The little Londoner rose angrily and cleared the things away, bidding fair to smash most of the crockery in her irritation. When she had done, she came back into the room and walked to the door. Her grandmother was awake in a moment.

"Where be you goin'?"

"Out, gran'ma."

"You'll stay indoors with me. Do ye hear, Elizabeth? You will bide here."

Elizabeth marched to the door.

"Stop!" cried the grandmother. "You do as you're told. I don't know whatever girls is comin' to."

"I've told you I'm going out. I've better to do than sit in all the afternoon while you sleep."

The old lady sat bolt upright and screamed like a parrot. "Is that so, indeed? And who's been keeping you all this time, I'd like to know? Who took you from your nasty home—"

"Never you mind my home! There's more than one kind of—of nastiness."

"You ungrateful wench! If it wasn't for me, you'd be in a slum now."

"I wish I was."

"Hear her! Wait till the parson comes! I'll tell him what you say. I share every crust I have, find you bed and board, and all I ask is a little company in return, and a little comfort, and this is what I get. I'm a pore, lonely old woman, but I can still say my say. Elizabeth, you'll stop in. You shan't go out."

She rose from her chair and tottered across to where the girl was standing, and seized her by the wrists, shaking her. The grip of the old fingers was like a vice, and Elizabeth cried out with pain. Then she freed herself, and ran out of the door and down the road, not stopping until she was out of breath. She leant up against a gate, panting, wild-eyed, hair all disordered. She clenched her fists and glared at the peaceful countryside, the calm sky and the quiet fields so lost to human hopes. When could she get out of it? What was she to do to get back to the lights and warmth and comfort of the city? She burst into tears, sobbing with her head on her hands as she leant on the top bar of the gate. She cried in the demonstrative manner of the Cockney child, and it was no wonder that the man who passed by stopped and stared, and finally came up and put a hand on her shoulder.

She turned round with a start.

"Cheer up!" he said. "What's wrong with you?"

She looked at him. The old, familiar Cockney accent stirred her blood and made her forget not only her troubles, but the fact that he was a stranger. He was neatly dressed in a suit that was old, but carefully brushed and trim. His face was smooth-shaven, his collar and his shoes were clean,

and from a keen, worn, bronzed face there smiled a pair of jolly brown eyes. So Elizabeth turned away from him and howled.

"Lumme!" he cried. "Put a sock in it, mate! You won't do no good by going on like that."

She went on crying.

"I never did understand these country girls," he said to himself. "I bet there's nothing more wrong with her than smashing a milk jug. Bless your heart, girl, look what a lovely day it is! You ain't dead yet."

She lifted her head and looked up, and he smiled so brightly that she was forced to smile, too.

"Now," he said, "dry your eyes and sit down under that tree, and tell me all about it. I'm a sailor, I am, and you bet your life that I've plenty of sympathy left for a pretty girl."

Without knowing why, she did as she was told. They sat on a soft and mossy mound at the foot of a big elm.

"Now let's have it."

"There's nothing to tell you about."

"I knew there wasn't. But you shouldn't let nothing get on your nerves. Be like me, free and easy, with never a care in the whole wide world. I've got quite enough to think about just doing my job and enjoying myself in me time off. I don't suppose it's any different with you, really."

"It is."

"Why?"

She told him—a long and grisly tale of household hardships and wicked grandmothers. He listened in grave silence, nodding his head periodically in agreement with her.

"Too bad, too bad! Just 'cos you're young and lively, and she's old and 'arf dead. She don't understand you. She don't want to. But I understand you, old pal, though I did say once that country girls beat me all the time. Give me a London girl, and I know what she wants. I can tell what's wrong with her when she starts howling. She's always got a reason."

Elizabeth dug her toes into the turf and thought long and hard. So here was a chap as could always tell what was wrong with a London girl. Well, she wouldn't show him any more of her heart than need be. If he thought her a country bumpkin, it was his own look-out. She had wasted her life among cows and horses and the dull beasts of the field, and it was only natural that she should look countrified. She would

not tell him anything about herself. If he liked to find out, he might. So Elizabeth rose and said she must go.

"I don't believe you," said the sailor. "If you did go, it'd only be back where you ran away from. Why not come for a walk? Come and have a glass of beer with me down at 'The Deerstalkers.'"

She stared at him with a shocked expression. "Goodness me! What are you thinkin' of? I couldn't be seen drinking beer in a public-house

"But I haven't got a hat."

"Never mind about your hat."

"I must. I must go back and get it."

"How about grandma?"

"I don't care about her. She can say what she likes."



"I didn't know you were here, Mary. When did you come over on this job?" Mary looked uncomfortable, and said that she had been there a week."

with a man I don't know. Why, what would people say?"

"Well, make it a cup of tea, and we needn't go to 'The Deerstalkers,' seeing as how you're such a partickler young lady. We can take a walk to Linton and go to the tea gardens there. People will think we're visitors."

"All right, then, I'll come with you."

He lifted her by the arm, and held it in friendly fashion until they were within a few yards of the cottage.

Then she drew away. "This is where I live," she said. "Let me go. You walk straight on, and I'll come after you."

She tiptoed into the parlour. Her grand-

mother was not there. She crept hastily upstairs and looked into the little bedroom which they shared. The old lady was asleep in her clothes. Elizabeth darted in, took her hat and coat from the bedpost, and ran out again. As she did so, there was a shrill cry. The ogre was after her again. But she laughed and ran out into the road and rejoined her sailorman.

They walked for some yards, and then an Army lorry came thundering by. The sailor hailed it, and the driver pulled up.

"Going our way, swaddy?" he inquired.

The soldier looked at them. He looked at the girl first, and liked her. Then he looked at the sailor, and was fascinated by the encouraging grin which spread over that open countenance.

"Whenever you want to go to Australia," said the sailor, "write to my secretary, and I'll see he finds you a cabin. I believe in giving fair dues."

"You a mallow?"

"Will you stop and have a drink when we get there?"

"Can't stop," said the driver. "But since you did mention the subject of drinks——"

The sailor dived into his pocket and fished out a shilling. "This any good to you?"

The driver jammed the clutch, started off, and took one hand from the steering wheel to receive the gift. He put the shilling in his mouth, bit it carefully, and announced that, as far as he could see, it was quite good.

"Don't mind me tasting it, mate," he said, "but you know what sailors are."

They all three laughed very heartily. The hedges flashed by. The road lifted

up into little white hills, and down again into curving valleys. There was much gay chatter and talk between them, and it seemed scarcely more than a few minutes before they pulled up in Linton. The sailor jumped

out first, handed the girl down with all the courtesy of a seventeenth-century cavalier, and shook hands with the driver, who vanished in a cloud of dust.

He and the girl made their way to the tea gardens and took their seats in a corner. There were quite a few visitors being served, almost all townspeople. The girl scrutinised them closely to see if there was anyone she knew. She could find no one.

"When you've finished," said the sailor, "perhaps you will tell me what we're going to have." He beckoned to a chubby maid, with a cap and apron on, who was coming down the path. As she approached them with her empty tray, she caught sight of Elizabeth and stared.

"I expect you see lots of life? . . . My name is Burton."

"Sure thing. And this is my sister."

He bowed and winked expressively, and the driver opened the lorry door and made room for them to get in.

"Where do you want to go?"

"Linton. You going that way?"

"Yes."





"Hello!" said that young lady. "I didn't know you were here, Mary. When did you come over on this job?"

Mary looked uncomfortable, and said that she had been there a week.

"I expect you see lots of life," said the sailor, without waiting for an introduction. "My name is Burton—Alfred Burton. I'm a friend of hers she hasn't seen for a long time. I've known her longer than you, though it's some time since we met last. In fact, we're sort of cousins."

"What, you and Elizabeth?" inquired Mary.

"Elizabeth and me," said the sailor. And Elizabeth found herself admiring the clever way in which he had found out her name and told her his own. She gave her order, which Mary did not seem too pleased to take. Perhaps there was hauteur in her tone. Perhaps she was taking too much advantage of the fact that she had met Mary on terms of superiority. Alfred noted this.

"Don't put on side, my dear," he said. "It might just as well have been her coming to tea with me and you having to fetch it."

"Thank you," said Elizabeth haughtily.

"No offence," said the sailor. Then, seeing that she was just a trifle offended, he reached out his arm and squeezed her hand. She returned the pressure without knowing why, and Alfred Burton remarked that he was glad to see things were all right and that there was no cloud between friends.

When they had finished their tea, and the sailor had commented on the daintiness of Elizabeth's appetite, which was quite comprehensible, seeing that this was her second tea that day, he began to ask her more about herself.

"When I like people," he explained, "I like to know all about them."

"You know all about me."

"I know all you've told. But I don't suppose it's very much. What are you doing in a dead-and-alive hole like this?"

"I was born here," said Elizabeth with some surprise. "I live here—at least, I live in Sowerby."

"I bet you don't."

"I ought to know."

"So ought I. You're no country girl, for all your pink cheeks and shining eyes. You come from London. Walworth Road—that's where you come from."

"How do you know?"

"It's my business to know. I can tell a

duck from a goose, even though I'm not a farmer. What makes you spend your days here? Do you like it?"

"Do I like it!" The deep note of scorn rang through the four words.

"I bet you don't. Walworth Road on a Saturday night—that's your mark. Fried fish and chips, and the pictures, and the butchers' men shouting 'Buy, buy!' All the neighbours crowding round, so that you can see 'em close and smell 'em and feel you're a human being, and not something on four legs. Electric lights and motor-cars and a barrow of wheelks and an organ to dance to on the asphalt. Life and fun and jollity, something new every minute, the paper boys shouting the winners and all the latest murders. That's the stuff."

He looked at her. She was leaning across the table, staring at him with wide eyes.

"How did you know?" she whispered.

"It's my business to know."

"But how could you tell? It was—it was that made me cry, and not grandmother at all. You *are* wonderful. Where do you learn these things?"

"Up and down the earth," said the sailor. "Here one day and gone the next, meeting all kinds and speaking with them, looking 'em straight in the eyes and seeing what they think before they have said it. That's how I know."

"And what am I to do?" asked the girl. "How can I get out of it? I've got to stick on in this rotten hole, doing the housework, living like a turnip, never seeing no one, never speaking to no one, having no fun and no change, nothing but the same cleaning and cooking and washing-up day after day, and bed at half-past nine, and up again at six. What's to be done about it? You know everything. Won't you tell me?"

"I don't know as I ought to tell you. I don't know as you'd like me to tell you."

"Of course I would. I want to know. There ain't nothing I want to know more."

He bent over and took both her hands in his own. "Then I will tell you," he said. "I'm a sailor. I wander up and down the earth."

"You're lucky."

"Lucky? Am I? What am I chasing after, do you think? I love the sea, 'cos there's times when a peace and calm comes out of it which I never know anywhere else. But what am I chasing after all the time? Happiness, contentment. I've sought it in every land. Wherever I think it lies, there

I go and find it has gone before me. And at the next place I find it has gone again. I've looked for it now this many a year in more countries than you would think to see. I've sought it in cities almost as big as London, perhaps with more life in them, certainly dirtier and more crowded and more strange. But I shan't find it there, for happiness don't live in any place, but in the heart of a man. It isn't in the town no more than in the country, it isn't in the Indies no more than in England. It's where a man or woman is contented, and that can only be if they make themselves contented. When I came along and saw you this afternoon, I'd been looking round at the place where you live, which you hate and want to leave. It was like a little paradise, so quiet and beautiful, with fresh air and clear skies and all that you could want, no matter what you were, rich or poor, high or low. I'd just come from London. I'd been achin' to get back while

my ship was away, and when I did get back it was good to see Walworth Road again. But after a day or two it was no good any more. I hated the noise and the dirt of it. I wanted the air, open skies, and a sight of green fields. I couldn't stay a moment in the place, and so I hurried out into the country and came on you, crying because the green fields weren't whelk stalls, 'cos cows wasn't barrel-organs, and because you could smell clover instead of fried fish. Bless your heart, my dear, I knew it at once. As soon as you spoke I knew why you were crying. You were crying for the moon. But you won't get it. I ain't never got it, and I'm older than you."

He rose and stretched out his hand to lift her and take her with him. She sat where she was and looked at him like a fascinated rabbit.

"Come on," he said. "Wake up, mate! Let's take a walk 'fore you go back to grandma."



## EARTH'S SECRET.

**N**OW as the swallow to last summer's nest  
Returns with this returning glory, Spring,  
So has my soul from its far sojourning  
Come home again to joy, thus timely blest.

All newly written is the old palimpsest;  
No longer does the lark above the ling  
As with deliberate mockery mount and sing;  
My pulses burn once more and are possess.

Earth's secret in your body seems to leap,  
And in your ardent eyes the eternal light  
Is essenced with that grave reality  
Which is the beauty, waking or asleep,  
I serve, and which to full, deep-flowing height  
Moonlike has drawn the tides of you and me.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



"'I'd like to know what family's done for me,' he mused absently. 'What's it done except live for a few centuries in solid English comfort while its poor relations and such riff-raff scratch for a living at the ends of the earth? And why do we do it?'"

# "LEAVE TO PRESUME—"

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

"FAMILY?" complained Grouch in slightly thickened accents to the world at large. "What is it?"

The world at large, consisting at the moment of the Rocky Mountains and James Strode, made no answer.

"What is it but an accident, and a nasty one at that sometimes? Who cares a continental these days whether you're descended from William the Conqueror or the last word in sausage kings?"

"You do," said Strode.

Grouch's rhetoric was arrested in full flight. He turned, a dilapidated yet arresting figure, with his tangled grey beard and fine head, and subjected Strode to a quick glance of suspicion.

"What do *you* know about me?" he demanded.

"Nothing," said Strode.

"Well, then?" muttered Grouch.

Which was, perhaps, a curious conversation for the teamster and loader of a British Columbian shingle mill to indulge in. But after wrestling with knife-edged cedar throughout the day, these two were in the habit of perching themselves on a trellis bridge that spanned a glacial torrent, and there, blessedly immune from mosquitoes, they swung their legs in space and conversed as the spirit moved them.

The spirit—in both senses of the word—was moving Grouch this evening. Strode had never known him so communicative.

"I'd like to know what family's done for me," he mused absently. "Leightham—pronounced Leetham, just to make it more difficult. Silly name! Silly family! What's it done except live for a few centuries in solid English comfort while its poor

relations and such riff-raff scratch for a living at the ends of the earth? And why do we do it?”

Grouch's lean shanks and enormous feet beat the air like overweighted pendulums.

“Why don't we drift in with the port some fine evening, and claim the job of gardener or boot boy? Because it's 'not done.' Because our precious people would throw a fit and expire if we did half at home what we do out here. And we humour 'em. Why?”

“I wonder,” ventured Strode.

Grouch glared at him unseeingly for a space. “Because we're fools,” he jerked out. “Because we're hidebound, hamstrung, everlastingly damned by something—something I can't put a name to.”

“Why not call it tradition?” suggested Strode.

“All right, anything you like.” Grouch rocked with scorn on the edge of the bridge. “But it's got to be shaken off before a feller will do any good for himself. I'm going to shake it off,” he announced firmly.

“You'll find it goes deeper than you think,” warned Strode.

“Oh, shall I? Well, let me tell you that the minute I've saved enough to get out of these cursed mountains, I'm going to show my family what it owes me. It'll give 'em a shock, but that's what's coming to them.”

Strode saw fit to change the subject. “What's the matter with the mountains?” he inquired.

“Matter?” Grouch pounced on this new grievance with a vigour that justified the only name he was known by. “Wait till you've had ten years of 'em, my lad. Wait till they're your gaolers.”

“Gaolers?”

“Yes, that's what they are, and you'll find it out before you've done. Look at 'em standing there laughing at a poor devil sentenced to hard labour for life under their ugly noses. ‘You'll never get out,’ that's what they say. ‘We're here to stop you!’” He shook a hairy fist at the crimsoning peaks of The Three Sisters, and had recourse to the flask that seldom left him. “But they won't stop me—not when I get going!”

“And when will that be?”

For answer Grouch extracted a wallet from some hidden cranny of his disreputable person and fingered it reflectively.

“Another two hundred,” he said at last, “and you won't see me for dust. Two hundred—at the rate of three dollars a day. Oughtn't to take long, eh?”

Strode contrived not to smile, even at the wallet that had taken ten years to reach its present lean proportions.

“Why, no,” he encouraged. “You're doing fine.”

Grouch raised his eyes to the mountains with new-born defiance.

“Then I'll be able to laugh back,” he pointed out. “See those two big fellers with the pass between? Well, that's the way I'm going out of here, just so that I can look 'em in the face and laugh. I'm waiting for that as much as I'm waiting to drift in with the port. . . . What the devil am I talking about?” he added suddenly.

“Nothing much,” said Strode. “We'd better be making a move.”

Grouch suffered himself to be conducted back to camp, and, after a last glance at his beloved team of Percherons, turned in and slept like a child. Strode was used to him by now. To-morrow he would have forgotten everything he had said on the trellis bridge—which was, perhaps, as well.

But Strode would not. One meets strange folk in the course of world wanderings, but there was something about a Leightam, buried for life here in the heart of the Rockies, that stirred his imagination. He knew the name well. What Englishman did not? And it carried him back to a glimpse of Leightam Court through the trees of a Sussex lane. No wonder Grouch was at war with his world. No wonder he harboured dreams of “drifting in with the port. . . .”

When Strode came up from the prairie a few months ago, the bunk-house of the Summit Shingle Mill was full. That was how he came to be sharing Grouch's shack on the edge of the clearing. That the old man should have offered accommodation to anyone was a unique event in the annals of a camp where he had long since reached the status of an institution, and Strode was duly grateful. Since then the two had sweated side by side, and Strode had come to think that he knew his man. How far he was out in his calculations had been demonstrated by a flask on a trellis bridge. By such narrow margins may a man betray his soul.

The next day was the same as any other. At daylight, and in answer to the mill whistle, that pierced the silence of the mountains like a knife, Grouch rolled from his bunk, added a few clothes to those he seemed never to discard, and went out to groom his team. The process of saving two

hundred dollars at the rate of three a day had begun.

From high up on the mountain-side cedar logs came hurtling down the skidway and plunged like ungainly giants into a pool at its foot. Here cat-footed men leapt upon them, steering them with peavies in endless procession to the mill. A slow but inexorable ascent on the teeth of an endless chain, a series of shrieks as from a torture chamber, and the saw had done its work. They passed, slashed out of recognition, to the steaming shed, where their sap—their very life-blood—was extracted from them, and finally made their appearance in neatly-bound bundles bearing the stencilled and more or less truthful legend: *Summit Shingles Withstand the Weather*.

And it was Strode's fate at this juncture to load them on



a wagon, and Grouch's to drive them to the depot with his incomparable team four times a day. And in the evening it was the trellis bridge and the flask again.

Grouch seemed more than usually restrained that night, but presently broke silence.

"Bit over the odds last night, wasn't I?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Strode. He was aware that the

old man was studying him from under his shaggy brows.

"I have a notion I was talking drivell, that's all."

"What does it matter if you were?"

Grouch was assured.

"I noticed he was a bit lame. What do you do about that sort of thing?"

"Axle grease."

So their conversation—if it could be called that—waxed and waned, or ceased altogether in favour of gazing at the mountains and thinking their own thoughts.

It was at a moment such as this that the silence was broken by a



"Grouch's flask was in immediate action."

crackling of underbrush behind them, and a man broke from the bush. For a moment he stood as though dazed at sight of the clearing, then noticed the occupants of the bridge and stumbled towards them.

"Thought I heard a saw this way," he observed, with an evident effort to

He nodded his leonine head. "You're right there. What does it matter? What does anything matter? Clem's got greased heel," he added gravely. Clem was the off-horse in Grouch's team.

steady his voice. "I've been lost."

"How long?" demanded Grouch.

"Quite long enough," replied the other, and, with an attempt at a smile, slumped down against the bridge.

Grouch's flask was in immediate action. The patient was young, good-looking, and nattily dressed. Grouch summed him up: "One of these dude big-game-hunting parties. Ought to be hobbled, and picketed, and tame grizzlies set up for 'em at twenty feet. But he's a fine lad!"

He was. There, in the heart of the Rockies, the embodiment of youth and lithe strength unmarred by the coarsening influence of manual toil, he might have come from another planet. By contrast he made Grouch, bending over him with the flask, look uncommonly like a gorilla.

When he opened his eyes there was terror still in them, but that was gone the instant he found fellow-creatures at his side. He scrambled to his feet and shook himself like a young mastiff.

"Well, that's that!" he laughed apologetically. "And many thanks. Where am I?"

Grouch told him. "You'd better come back with us," he added. "I guess you can eat."

Apparently he could. But after a two-inch steak and a pyramid of slapjacks, Grouch cried a halt.

"You're right," agreed the boy, and pushed the plate obediently aside. "It wasn't so much being lost," he explained over a pipe of cut plug, "although that wasn't exactly pleasant. It was some queer beast that kept following me—a sort of dun-coloured shadow all day, and just a pair of eyes at night. I wasted most of my ammunition trying to shoot the thing."

"Mountain lion," supplied Grouch. "Panthers they are, really, and that's what they do—follow you up until you're done. You've been up against it, my lad."

"I rather felt that way," admitted the boy, and five minutes later was sleeping the sleep of exhaustion on Strode's bed.

The shriek of the mill whistle failed to arouse him the next morning, and it was not until Grouch had come in from grooming his team that the guest was up and about.

"By Jove," he exclaimed, standing in the shack doorway, looking out on the mountains, "this is great!"

"Think so?" said Grouch. "Well, come and see if breakfast's greater."

Over the meal it transpired that Grouch's summing up of the stranger was correct. He had started on a hunting trip from Fernie five days ago, had somehow lost touch with the guides, and had wandered

the bush ever since. The miracle was that he had come out alive.

"I suppose I'd better let someone know I'm here," he suggested, and admitted to having left "a man" and "a car" at the Railway Hotel.

"You can wire him from the freight depot," Grouch advised—"that is, if you fancy getting there on a load of shingles."

Not only did the boy fancy it, but he seemed to get considerable pleasure out of helping to hitch up the team, load and unload, manufacture misshapen slapjacks for dinner, and swing his legs from the trellis bridge in the evening.

"We'll make a lumberjack of you yet," Grouch told him.

A shadow seemed to fall on the boy's face. "I wish to goodness you would!" he exclaimed vehemently. "This is the life."

"Yes, for a day," railed Grouch.

"No, for keeps." The boy turned almost fiercely. "If you only knew what it is to get clean out and away from all the pettifogging things a fellow's surrounded by at home! I hate 'em! A Leightham's not built for them."

The name came unconsciously in the heat of the moment, and Grouch's thin shanks and enormous feet ceased to swing; that was all.

"Life's pettifogging anywhere when you get down to it," he muttered after a pause.

"Oh, yes, there are details, of course, but look at yours compared to mine! What's fairer and squarer than driving a good pair of horses for a living? It's a man's job."

"Well, isn't yours?"

"Mine?" The boy gave a short laugh.

"I haven't got one—yet. That's the trouble. I'm the pawn in a game of grab, I wish I could tell you—get it off my chest."

"Why not?"

"I doubt if you'd understand. In the Old Country we're cluttered up with things that don't seem to exist out here."

"Such as?"

"Oh, family trees—longer than your cedars, and a sight more complicated—entail, and all the other tinpot trappings of the past. But I don't mind *them* so much. It's the lawyers—herds and droves of queer little sleek fellows who do queer little sleek things. I came out here to get away from them for a bit."

"And what's it all about?"

"You may well ask," laughed the boy. "It's all about *me*."

"You?"

"Yes. I may not *look* as if I amounted to much—especially when I'm lost, with a mountain lion on my track—but apparently I do. I amount to considerable property at home—if there's anything left when the lawyers have finished. I'm the last of the Leighthams."

"You don't say?" commented Grouch.

The boy regarded him with the quick suspicion of the sensitive. "I say," he said, "you're laughing at me."

"Laughing? What should I laugh at you for?" growled Grouch.

"Oh, I don't know! All this must sound like Greek, or worse, in a country where it's not *who* you are, but *what* you are that counts. I'd better cut it out."

"You go right on from where you left off," commanded Grouch. "It's mighty interesting."

"Well, so long as it amuses you. I'm the last of a family called Leightham, it seems. They dug me out of a provincial bank—two pounds a week and find your own socks. Three Leighthams had died in quick succession, and 'without issue,' as they say in the best legal circles."

"Three?" echoed Grouch.

"Yes. Quick work, wasn't it? One was thrown, hunting, another was killed in the War, and the third disappeared years ago, and hasn't been heard of since."

"Ah, yes," mused Grouch, with a slow movement of the head, "I know those disappearing ones."

"The sleek ones have advertised, done everything."

"Scared to death of finding him, too, I'll bet."

"I expect so," laughed the boy. "But they didn't. So now they've applied for leave to presume death, and seem to think they'll get it. That's why they're backing me."

Grouch turned on him slowly with a puzzled frown. "Then what's your trouble?" he demanded. "If you're getting leave to presume things, why don't you presume them and hit the high spots for your ancestral home, and all that?"

"I'm not sure that I want to," said the boy quietly.

"Oh!" Grouch continued to subject the last of the Leighthams to a speculative scrutiny. "Well, we'll have to help you make up your mind."

And with that the evening session of leg-swinging and small-talk came to an abrupt end.

It was about midnight that Strode awoke and found Grouch's bunk empty. He was gone. So was his flask. And Strode found both precisely where he expected to find them.

A full moon rode clear overhead, illuminating the mountain world with an unearthly brilliance. Each peak was a silhouette, and Grouch was sitting on the trellis bridge, laughing at them.

"Grouch!" Strode called softly.

The old man turned with an air of ludicrous dignity. "Lord Leightham to you," he corrected, and giggled into his beard.

"I know," said Strode, "but you'd better come and turn in, all the same."

"What, on a night like this?" Grouch was seized by another paroxysm of mirth. "Not by a jugful! That you, Strode?"

"Yes."

"Well, prepare to receive the Order of Grand High Master of the Bed Socks, or anything else you fancy. We're going out of here—to-morrow. Come and help me to laugh!"

It took something like an hour of alternate cajolery and threat to get him back to his bunk, and then he was astir before the mill whistle had blown the next morning.

Strode feigned sleep and watched him. For some time he stood in contemplative pose, staring down at the sleeping boy. Then he crossed to the cracked and frameless mirror hanging over the wash-basin, and for the first time in Strode's memory looked into it. What he saw there it is impossible to determine, because in the midst of the process the mill whistle blew, and he went out to groom his team.

After that there was little time to determine anything, for the Summit Shingle Mill was treated to a mild sensation in the form of a shimmering touring car and an equally shimmering chauffeur, bent on collecting someone of importance named Leightham.

"Good-bye," said the boy, "and thanks most awfully."

Grouch was hitching up at the time. "So you're hitting the high spots, after all," he commented drily.

"Yes, I think perhaps I'd better."

"I think perhaps you had," said Grouch.

And a few minutes after the car and its waving occupant had been lost to sight, the incomparable team of Percherons plodded up the hill.

Their driver leant forward, apparently lost in thought, then looked up.

"Clem's greased heel's all right," he told Strode. "Wonderful stuff, that axle grease."



# THE ACCOMPANIST

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

A HOLIDAY mood of languor held Harton and his companion silent for a time. They were drinking in the beauty of the garden, the slope of the hillside to the valley, and the sweep of pine woods dark against the skyline.

"Yes, dreams are wonderful things," Harton said suddenly.

"Dreams?" Lent turned his head, half smiling. "Had we spoken of them?"

Harton ignored the question. He was looking over his shoulder at the house behind. "It's a pretty place. The owner of it is a delightful woman. It's odd, though, that we should find ourselves here."

"Odd?" Lent shrugged the word aside. "We wanted a spell of the country, and were told that Mrs. Kolton occasionally took paying guests. The death of her husband makes any addition to the family purse welcome, I suppose. Anyhow, she takes an occasional paying guest, so here we are."

"Yes, here we are. It's odd, very." Harton pulled at his pipe reflectively. "As I said just now, dreams are queer things. Have you ever had one that became—how shall I put it—a familiar friend? You dream it at recurring intervals—the same place, the same people, the same atmosphere." Harton broke off, looking over his shoulder at the house.

Lent lay back in his chair, watching Harton with amused eyes. "What a fellow you are for whimsies, and odd nooks and crannies of life!"

Harton's voice came rapidly. "Time after time I dreamt of a gabled house built on a hillside, with a pine wood for background. There were diamond-paned windows set wide night and day. In the left wing of the house there was a bow window, over that a stone balcony, and over that a long flat window out of proportion with the other windows of the house. I've seen the place in all four seasons of the year. One detail of the dream was that there was always a candle burning in that higher window.

And there was soft music being played somewhere in the house. I could never follow the tune or repeat it afterwards. It was a background of melody, delicately beautiful and *persistent*. It seemed as much part of the house as the stones the walls are built of."

Lent glanced back at the house. It was gabled, with diamond-paned windows and a bow window in the left wing with a stone balcony above it. Lent's eyes went higher. Yes, there was the long flat window, its size out of proportion to the others.

Lent nodded over his pipe. "You'd seen a photograph of the place, probably. One's memory grips some pictures and lets others slide. The candles and the music were the only things left for fancy to supply."

"I admit the probability of the photograph," Harton conceded. "I've no recollection of ever seeing one. But relatives of mine knew Mrs. Kolton in her youth, and it's possible a picture of the place was knocking about their house when I was a boy. But the music——"

Harton broke off, staring at the valley. He hunted for phrases and dismissed them as inadequate.

"I can't describe that melody," he said. "It was background, an accompaniment." He looked up quickly. "That's it. An accompaniment exquisitely played."

"An accompaniment to what?" Lent suggested. "Were there voices? A violin? A flute?"

"I can't tell you. I didn't notice. I heard just that exquisite sound of melody for background." Harton broke off, half laughing. "Patience has you in tow to-night. You usually gibe at fancies."

"It's the atmosphere of the place," Lent admitted. "Here I can listen. In the office I'd probably fling a ledger at your head. You were always a queer chap, Harton. Ah, here comes Mrs. Kolton!"

The mistress of the house came across the lawn towards them. She was a slight woman, white-haired, with lines running

criss-cross about her eyes and mouth. The tilt of her head, the way she moved, the quick flash of her smile, spoke of charm. "Supper is ready," she said. "I'm afraid you didn't hear the gong."

Harton got to his feet. "No. I'm sorry."

"We were speaking of dreams," Lent said, as they walked towards the house. "You'll find when my friend Harton gets on to one of his fancies he's hard to silence."

"Dreams?" Mrs. Kolton's voice showed quick interest. "Mine are always futile. They're shreds and patches that refuse to make a whole."

"It's the same with mine," Lent agreed.

"I suppose it's a matter of temperament," Mrs. Kolton suggested. "None of my people dream consistently. Speaking of my people"—she opened the dining-room door and stepped inside, followed by Harton and Lent—"let me introduce you to my family."

There were five young people in the room. Harton's eyes went quickly from one face to the other. They were a good-humoured group, with resonant voices lifting in quick interchange of talk. Mrs. Kolton performed the necessary introductions.

"Stella, my eldest daughter—Nora—Evelyn—my sons Rob and Basil."

It was like being received into the midst of a whirlwind. Contact with modern youth always left Harton slightly breathless. He was mentally cataloguing the group—Stella, with black hair and laughing eyes; Nora, with reddish hair and blue eyes; Evelyn, demure, a coquette. The sons were college youths, home on vacation. Laughter, question, and retort ran from one end of the table to the other. They fenced admirably, with words for rapiers.

Harton glanced at his hostess. She was the circle of calm at the heart of the whirlwind. She was deft, too, Harton quickly conceded. She could knit the ravelled edge of an argument. She knew how to turn aside the too sharp edge of a retort.

Harton sat between Stella and Basil. With good-humoured tolerance they acted as interpreters.

"Our jokes must sound double Dutch to you," Stella apologised. "For instance"—she nodded towards the lower end of the table—"Nora and Rob are using the family slogan: 'When mother goes to Rome.' It's a phrase we use to describe the impossible."

"Why Rome?" Harton asked.

"It's a place she always wanted to see. She never managed it, of course. Five of us, and the house, and all the rest of it——" Stella laughed and shrugged. "'When mother goes to Rome' is like saying we'll do so and so when we can reach the moon."

"I see," Harton nodded. "It's hard lines on Mrs. Kolton, though."

"Oh, she doesn't mind, does she, Basil?"

"Rather not. She enjoys the joke with the rest of us. The *mater's* a good sport."

The dining-room window faced the slope of the hillside. The little town in the valley was dwarfed by distance. Almost it assumed an air of fantasy.

"A toy village held in the cup of a giant's palm," Harton said suddenly. "The lights from the windows are flashes from the giant's ringed fingers."

Stella shrugged and laughed. "You've caught the infection."

"Infection?"

"Fancies, dreams. The last guest we had suffered from them. He said this house was made for people of imagination. If so, the wrong people live in it. There isn't an ounce of it in the family."

Harton's eyes went to Mrs. Kolton at the head of the table.

"Oh, the *mater*!" Stella waved a dismissing hand. She might as well have said aloud: "The *mater* doesn't count."

"You have a charming home," Harton insisted. "Is this part of it as old as the left wing?"

"No. I forget how hoary that is. We don't use it. It's full of lumber—things our great-grandmothers used. There are spinning-wheels, tambour frames, samplers."

"A harpsichord or a lute?" Harton suggested.

"No, nothing musical. In that respect the rest of the house matches the lumber rooms. We haven't a piano in the place. A less musical family doesn't exist."

"Not even——" Harton's eyes went to the head of the table.

"The *mater*? Not a bit of it. Like the rest of us, she neither plays nor sings. It's queer, when you remember the old story about the house."

Harton's voice came insistently into the girl's pause. "The old story? May I hear it?"

Stella stifled a yawn. She drew her brother into the net with a gesture.

"You tell him, Basil."

"Something or other about a sound of

music always heard about the place. There's a tradition that Koltons will never be without a musical background. An accompaniment—that's the phrase. There's none of it in our day. We were all born here, and not one of us has heard it. These old tales are usually piffle."

Basil's voice fell silent till it lifted again in an exchange of banter with Nora. Harton was studying this family. They had vivacity, comradeship, good temper. They were cloth well woven—Harton smiled at his image. Mentally he saw Mrs. Kolton working deftly, leaving no ragged edges on the loom of home life.

day. They received us into a kind of family intimacy straight off. 'When mother goes to Rome'—I'm at home with the catchword already."

"She must have had a stiff time of it since her husband died," Harton suggested—"those two lads at college and the girls to place in life."

Lent lighted a cigarette, glancing back at the house. "I sat next to Nora, the red-haired girl. I happened to mention music.



"'No. I'm sorry.' . . . 'We were speaking of dreams.'"

Harton and Lent strolled in the garden after supper. Lent expressed perfect approval of their surroundings.

"It's a nice place and they're nice folks. The young people are as fresh as a spring

'Don't mention the word here,' she said. 'There isn't one of us who cares a straw for it. Living *here*, too. There's a legend——'"

Harton broke into Lent's recital. "I

heard it. 'Piffle!' was my informant's summing up."

"It's odd about your dream. The reality doesn't quite match it, though."

"Yes," Harton nodded.

"But——" Lent broke off, laughing. "What a queer chap you are, Harton! When?"



"Supper is ready," she said. "I'm afraid you didn't hear the gong."

"In a momentary lull of the chatter at supper. I heard it then distinctly."

Harton scarcely noticed his companion's shrug of incredulity. Presently Lent said "Good night!" with a final shrug for the other's abstraction.

Lights sprang from the upstairs windows. Then one by one they vanished. The outline of the

You heard them say there isn't a musical instrument in the house, and not one member of the household is a vocalist. The dream tripped you in that particular."

"On the contrary, the dream was exact in every detail," Harton said quietly.

"You mean you've heard something?"

house was a vague shadow against the background of pine trees. The night was moonless, but stars were vivid overhead. These rents of light in the vault of the sky held Harton's eyes for a moment. Dropping them, he saw a sudden gleam of light close at hand.

He was standing near the disused part of the house. The details of his dream came to his mind forcefully—this left wing, and high up the large flat window with the lighted candle. A minute ago this window had been in darkness. Now the light sprang like swift reflection of the stars overhead.

Harton looked up at the lighted window. He was recalling Stella's sentences. "It's full of lumber—spinning-wheels, tambour frames." Then his question: "A harpsicord or a lute?" And her quick answer: "No, nothing musical."

Yet surely, as he stood there listening—

A swift impulse took him to the flight of steps that led into the lower room. An unlatched door, swaying to and fro in the night breeze, was invitation. He crossed the floor of the lower room and came to the foot of a stairway. Darkness held sway about the lower steps; higher up, threads of light flickered and danced at the bidding of every breath of wind.

Harton mounted the first flight of steps, going softly. At the head of the stairs an angle of the wall faced the open door of a room beyond. He knew this must be so, because a reflection was thrown on the wall space. Somebody was playing a piano—the shadow of the moving hands was clearly outlined. The keyboard was only half visible, so that the hands were in his line of vision when they played the lower octaves. They were beautiful hands, but they were evoking strange music. It seemed to lack completion. It was background only. An accompaniment—the word came to Harton like a flash in darkness. Somebody was practising a difficult accompaniment. He could measure the difficulties by the assiduous care of the pianist. She practised *diminuendo* and *crescendo*—the same phrase over and over. She repeated quaint *motifs*. She seemed to train her fingers to alert changes of theme to screen, if necessary, a chance slip of the performers.

There was a minute's pause presently. Harton waited, tense, in the silence. It was broken by a new phrase of music—an exquisite melody, a golden mesh of sound. Yet it still suggested background, as if even in her most exalted moments the pianist felt herself accompanist only to some higher minstrelsy.

Harton stepped softly backwards. A swift impulse had carried him to the foot of the stairway. Now he retreated, realising that he played eavesdropper.

Back in his room, he smiled at his folly. Evidently some member of the family went to the old part of the house to practise, away from the ears of the others. But, if so, why those assertions of non-musical traits? Why—Harton laughed at his own curiosity as he laid his head on his pillow.

The second week of Harton's visit saw Lent's departure to the City. A new guest came the same evening. He was an old friend of Mrs. Kolton's, and Harton was conscious of a desire to talk with him. Garthin was nothing loath. He enthused about the house and its position.

"Set like an eyrie on the heights," he suggested. "Somebody with the seeing eye chose this site in the past."

"That's true," Harton agreed. "The seeing eye and the hearing ear—they're rare these days."

Harton was conscious of the other's quick scrutiny. His eyes asked questions without the aid of vocal utterance.

"I manage a week here once or twice a year," Garthin said aloud. "The house and its owner and the surrounding country are not easily matched."

"The owner of the house is a delightful woman," Harton agreed.

"She has any amount of courage. She was left a widow with five children and none too much money. In one way and another she has seen them up to young manhood and womanhood. She's a genius for managing. She has an equal genius for self-denial. Her own tastes and desires—" Garthin's gesture was of one who blew thistledown aside.

Harton said tentatively: "Here one's thoughts turn instinctively to note and rhythm."

Garthin nodded over his pipe. "So you've heard the old tale?"

"Something about a sound of music always to be heard here."

"Ever heard it yourself?"

"Yes," Harton said.

Garthin's voice came quickly: "Don't you realise what it is we hear?"

"An accompaniment."

"Who plays it? And on what instrument? Surely you see?"

"No." Harton shook his head. "I'm utterly in the dark. I hear, and that's an end of it."

"Or the beginning. Some day you'll understand."

Garthin turned back into the house, and Harton was left alone in the evening

dusk. Shadows had an air of secrecy, moving hither and thither about the garden. They hid the valley, they made of the pine woods a vague line of mystery, until presently the moon crept to the

in Harton's thoughts like brush on canvas. He saw Mrs. Kolton, her fingers deft and tireless, making dresses for the girls. He saw retrenchment wrought with so fine a generalship that Basil's tutoring became



"Harton mounted the first flight of steps, going softly."

horizon, climbed higher, and flooded the garden with silver.

There were sounds of laughing voices from the house behind. Stella, Nora, Rob, Basil—they were making plans for the next day. Harton had a confused idea of a dance they were going to, and of the girls' dresses, rainbow-tinted and exquisitely sewn.

"The *mater* is clever with her fingers," Nora was saying.

Basil's voice came crisply: "The *mater* says she can manage to let me have that extra six months with old Rochester."

Nora again: "I've talked her over to the idea of two years at the art school. She'll manage the money somehow. She's great at managing."

The chorus lifted enthusiastically: "Good little soul, the *mater*!" Then the laughing tag: "I suppose she'll stop contriving when she goes to Rome."

The confused medley of sentences moved

a possibility, and Nora's course at the art school.

"Good little soul, the *mater*!" Harton could still hear the echo of the phrase.

Alone in his room he crossed to the window, opened it, and looked across at the old part of the house. He saw the lattice window, the lit candle, and he heard the sound of persistent music. To-night Harton realised the music poignantly. It held some message of import. It beckoned him to heights of understanding. He

reached them suddenly. Mrs. Kolton was the accompanist. She was essential background. She was exquisite melody at the heart of the family's life.

"When mother goes to Rome. . . ." Well, it *was* a quaint idea. You didn't expect accompanists to take the platform themselves.

\* \* \* \* \*

Something brushed across Harton's face. Moving his hand to push it aside, he opened his eyes and met Lent's eyes smiling at him.

"You've had a good sleep," Lent laughed. "We came out here for a cigar and a lazy half-hour, and you dozed off."

Harton glanced behind him at the house. It was gabled; there was a bow window in the left wing with a stone balcony above it. There came a sound of laughing voices from one of the rooms.

"Been dreaming?" Lent questioned.

"Yes. It was rather an odd dream. There was something about the hearing ear."

An elderly woman came across the lawn towards them. Charm was present in her every gesture. The very soul of motherhood looked from her eyes.

"Are we late for supper, Mrs. Kolton?" Lent questioned. "Blame Harton. He's been dreaming. Look at him now! I believe he's still dreaming."

"On the contrary," Harton smiled, "I was never wider awake."

Mrs. Kolton turned back across the lawn. "I hope my young people haven't disturbed you. Stella, Nora, Basil——" She looked up, smiling. "Listen to the sound of their mirth!"

"I hadn't noticed them" Harton said quietly. "I was listening to music."

"Music?" She shook her head quickly. "We are none of us musical."

Harton smiled into her puzzled eyes. "Nevertheless, I hear it. An accompaniment, most exquisitely played."

She shook her head again. With a gesture she seemed to push Harton's words aside.

"No, we neither play nor sing. We are not a musical family."

Harton was smiling to himself. His ears were full of melody, of rhythm, of a lilting accompaniment played by the white-haired woman at his side.

## A DREAM VOICE.

**A**T evening, as I wandered in the shade  
Of stately forest trees,  
And saw the twilight shadows in the glade,  
And felt the passing breeze,  
There seemed to ring a voice upon the air.  
I heard it faint and far, yet clear vibrating:  
All Nature, all the world, was hushed to hear  
In silent, breathless waiting.

It sang of deeds of valour and of worth,  
Of battles fierce and long,  
Fought all unknown, afar upon the earth—  
A splendid stirring song;  
And then the last deep murmur died away  
Into the evening peace as dewdrops were falling.  
Was it a thought—a dream voice gone astray,  
Or was it Echo calling?

MURIEL TORRES.

# THE FREEDOM OF JHANSI

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ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

WHERE the Himalayas lift their snow-clad peaks into the blue sky over India, and the green waves of foliage of the Terai Forest surge against their flanks from the flat lands of Eastern Bengal, a road climbed steeply up between the precipitous spurs. In and out among the foot-hills it turned and twisted; now under rugged cliffs, now squeezing between walls of solid rock, here bordering a rushing stream that came tumbling down in foaming cascades full-fed by the melting snows below the ice-peaks, there crossing high over it by an iron bridge.

And down the road lurched an elephant bearing on the straw-filled pad on its back a load of wooden cases, while a mahout bestrode its neck, his bare feet dangling under the flapping ears. Far below them lay the green sea of verdure of the great forest that extends from the foot of the mountains for thirty-odd miles to the south, but to east and west stretches away for hundreds of miles along below the great northern barrier of India. In its gloomy depths roam the giants of the animal world—wild elephants in sociable herds a hundred strong, solitude-loving rhinoceroses and lone bison-bulls surly and suspicious. During the dark hours there is no peace in it, for night-prowling beasts of prey keep the harmless deer awake in terror. Tigers and panthers range the forest glades or steal soft-footed around the thorny enclosures of the jungle-folks' huts and seek a way in to raid the trembling goats and cows inside. By day vultures wheel in the clear sky, the monkeys frolic through the tree-tops, and over their heads the painted hornbills flap in noisy flight; while loud above the twitter of small birds in the dense undergrowth rings the defiant crowing of the bright-plumaged jungle-cock.

From the lighter timber of the hills, the tall, flower-decked bushes, the bamboo brakes with their feathery plumes, the glossy-leaved plaintains, the straight, slender stems of sago palms laden with trailing clusters of fruit, the elephant passed down under the great trees in the forest and, where the level began, came out from their shade into a grassy clearing. In this stood a high, single-storied wooden building open at each end, showing within the clumsy bulks of two elephants fettered by their huge ankles to iron rings set in brick standings, swaying restlessly, shifting their weight from leg to leg, brushing the worrying flies from their heads and bodies with leafy branches held in their trunks. It was a *peelkhana*, or elephant stable. And, now lightened of her load and pad, the new-comer went into it and was chained to her place, glad to rest, her day's work done.

Slaves of the Ring they were, these three great beasts, trapped in some forest of India or Burma a man's lifetime ago—two of them at least; for the returned toiler was a giddy young female a mere thirty odd years old and captive during fifteen of them. Jhansi she was named, quite a frivolous youngster compared with Dundora and Khartoum, her staid and matronly companions seventy or eighty years old—bare middle-age for their race.

Dotted around the clearing were a few grass-thatched huts, their walls made of bamboo strips. These sheltered the slaves of the Slaves. For even in their servitude the noble animals had servants to wait on them, to spread their banquets of leaves and grass and tempt their appetites with tit-bits of rice-balls, to be their handmaids and adorn them at the toilet hour, blacking their foreheads with tar, and for grand occasions drawing coquettish designs with



white paint on their faces. The Government of India, which deprives so many of their kind of their birthright to freedom and forces them to toil in its service, yet recognises their nobility and pays two men to wait on each tame elephant: one, its mahout, to conduct it; the other, its coolie, to feed, wash and attend to it like a nursemaid.

And these three captives were honoured above their fellows; for, like the Viceroy of India, they had an armed guard of soldiers, and every night sentries watched over their slumbers lest thieving men from across the Bhutan Frontier, three miles up on the mountains above their heads, should try to steal them, or—a more likely danger—wild ones of their own race attack them in the dark hours.

Fifteen hundred feet over the clearing was the small border outpost of Buxa Duar, from which these soldiers came. Just a stone fort in which a couple of white officers and two hundred sepoys did their small share of guarding the vast country of India that stretched away below them to the south for two thousand miles. And these three elephants were given to them to bring up the first steep steps of the mighty mountains their daily bread—the food and supplies of all kinds that they needed; for their isolated little station could furnish nothing. So almost every day one or other of the mammoths plodded with lurching stride up and down the steep road that saw no other traffic, carrying on the thick, straw-filled, mattress-like pads bound on their broad backs sacks of flour to feed the hungry soldiers or heavy boxes of cartridges to be fired away on the rifle-range, where all day long the rattle of musketry disturbed the silence of the ancient hills.

The swarthy sepoys from the sandy plains of Rajputana, men of Bikanir who had never seen elephants before, except perhaps those few of them who some time or other had watched their gallant, soldierly Maharajah move in royal state through his desert-ringed city, took the great slaves to their hearts. They never failed to gather round them when they came up to the Fort and offer them a share of their modest rations in the shape of pancake-like chuppaties made of flour and water. And the soldiers laughed like children as the snaky trunks shot out to seize the toothsome gifts, then curled back to thrust them into the gaping mouths; and they compared the gentle nature of the great beasts with the snarling

spitefulness of the camels in the sandy wastes of their own country.

The senior officer of the outpost, the Commandant, loved his three big slaves, but not with an equal love. For while he could trust Khartoum or Dundora to carry him about the forests hunting, and knew that, when he raised his rifle to fire, they would stand like rocks even in the face of springing tiger or charging rogue elephant, Jhansi was useless for sport. For she was nervous, easily frightened, as hysterical and highly strung as any Society beauty in the days when spleen and vapours were fashionable. It was not her fault; she was born a *meerga*, that is, a third-rate animal, badly shaped, cowardly and apprehensive by nature. So she was not to be relied on in the chase. When the sportsman on her back threw up his gun to take aim at any quarry, even a harmless antelope, Jhansi would hop nervously from foot to foot or swing about and try to bolt, despite the heavy blows of her angry mahout's iron goad raining on her thick skull.

This infirmity of hers brought its own punishment. For on days when one or other of her stable-companions lounged like a lady at her own pace through the green ways of the forest, carrying the Commandant to shoot sambhur stag, barking-deer or jungle-fowl to give meat to his sepoys or vary the monotony of tinned rations for his brother-officer and himself, Jhansi, maid-of-all-work, was forced to bring up stores to the Fort or go out to gather the bulky load of leafy boughs that formed the meals of the elephants. She liked the latter task best, for it was pleasanter to plod through the cool shade of the woodland, sweeping up the grass with her trunk and eating as she went, or stand at ease while the coolie on her shoulders hacked off branches and piled them on her back, than to toil heavily laden up the steep mountain road, so heated by the sun's rays that it blistered her feet.

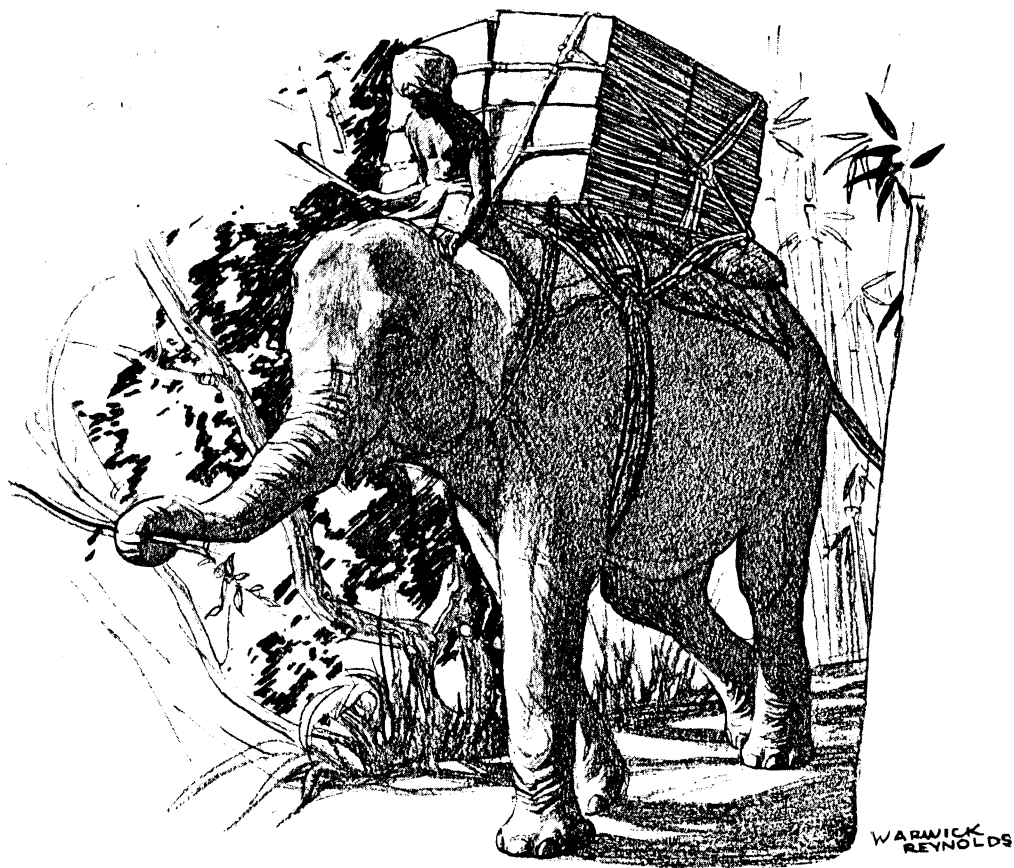
But it was not for her to choose. The daily task was prescribed for her, and she had to perform it whether she liked it or not. It never entered her big head to rebel. Elephants, when captured, take readily to human discipline; for in the wild state they are used to obedience in their mass movements. Yet at times vague longings for liberty stirred her. She had an impatient desire to shake off the sharp-edged wooden cases or the sacks that made their dead weight felt through the thick pad roped on her back. Sometimes, when her head was

directed to the toilsome mountain road, she wished that she could turn back and loiter at her will through the shady forest, stripping leaves from the trees, tearing down toothsome creepers and moving how and when she liked. At times in the *peelkhana* the feel of the iron fetters around her legs grew irksome, and unconsciously she strained at the strong chains that held her.

So among human beings of her sex the longing for freedom from the invisible bonds

resigned herself to lower her huge bulk to the ground and let men pile the heavy loads on her back, to rise or kneel at the angry word or the cruel blow of the iron ankus, to face the broiling sun or the chilly rain at the bidding of others, and never thought of trampling her taskmasters to death and fleeing away into the forest to lead her own life.

Her existence was monotonous. She had not the change of scene—and the elephant



"For her the sun-scorched high-road of toilsome duty."

that bind them, from the gyves of convention, from the need to labour, the dreary treadmill of uncongenial domestic work, often becomes well-nigh unendurable, and they cry aloud for liberty. No wonder, then, that the less-understanding elephant felt sometimes that her slavery was hard to bear. Yet just as a woman continues to endure with the wonderful passive courage of her sex, and goes about her daily task with a smiling face and an aching heart, so Jhansi

is by nature a rover—the excitement of the chase, that her steadier-nerved companions had when they bore the hunters through the green aisles of the forest, beat through dense jungle to drive the scared and savage tiger out to face the guns, or stood boldly to the charge of a white-tusked giant of their kind, confiding in the courage and steady aim of the men on their backs. For her the sun-scorched high-road of toilsome duty, for them the green glades of this forest fairyland,

But as the fairyland of the children has its wicked elves, so this magic realm of the grown-ups, of men who love the excitement, the dangers of the chase, has its evil geni. There are surly-tempered giant bears that, angered if a luckless woodcutter stumbles unwittingly on them as they grub up roots in the soil or rob the wild bees' nests, rise up on hind legs and, with one blow of a huge paw, crack the poor wretch's skull like an egg. There is the rare man-eating tiger that sneaks through the villages at night and snatches up some unfortunate peasant woman at her door; the daring panther that spies its would-be hunter waiting for it in the crook of a tree, and drags him down to death with a lightning spring; the terrible king-cobra, that gigantic serpent which, unprovoked, will attack human beings and with venomous tooth or crushing coil destroys man and beast, so swiftly moving that it can overtake a fleeing man even on a pony in the open.

But worst of all is the rogue elephant, as is called the savage, ill-conditioned brute that, abandoning the kindly herds which are harmless in the knowledge of their combined strength, wanders sullenly about the jungle, waging relentless war on human beings. Woe betide the luckless cultivators who dare to try to defend their little plots of scanty grain against his inroads!

To this quarter of the great forest came sometimes such a one, a bully and a murderer and a constant menace. He had for some reason developed an extraordinary hatred of men and their works, and was devoid of the fear that most beasts of the wild have of mankind. Tales were told with bated breath by panic-stricken dwellers in the bamboo huts of the Terai of his misdeeds that were marked by unbelievable cruelty and cunning. Tales of men and women surprised and slain in the jungle, of the frail villages housing the coolies who worked on the forest tea-gardens trampled down by him, of bullock-carts ambushed on the rare roads of the district and their teams and driver trodden to death, were widespread. The boldest European planter did not care to wander on foot in the forest by day or even in his own plantation by night, since two of their number were stalked by this gruffy brute within a hundred yards of their bungalow in the dark and only saved by the sudden warning of a dog with them.

Incredible but true, this demon elephant had attempted to attack a train standing in a station on the narrow-gauge railway

that penetrated the forest to tap the tea-gardens district; but, deterred by the shrieking steam-whistle operated by the scared engine-driver, he had tried to uproot the platform in blind rage, and broke off one of his tusks in it. Screaming with pain, he rushed off into the jungle; and, gratefully praising the seventy thousand gods in the Hindoo Paradise, the terrified babu station-master and his one porter emerged thankfully from the booking office in which they had locked themselves, while the driver hurried off his train.

Such were the wicked fairies that spoiled the glamour of this realm of fantasy where all should have been beautiful and good—alas, this one rogue elephant alone had enough original sin in him to turn a paradise into an inferno! Yet in the immensity of the Terai such evil things were generally hidden from sight and might never be met with, just as in the daily round of civilised life murderers and robbers might appear to have no existence outside the columns of the newspapers. And Jhansi's lot seemed as humdrum as that of a cart-horse in a city; and if she had been human she would probably have grumbled at its dullness and complained that "nothing ever happened."

But adventures come sometimes to those who do not seek them, and the even monotony of her life was unexpectedly broken. One day, as usual, the Cinderella of the *peelkhana* was ridden by her mahout into the depths of the forest to fetch the daily ration for her sister-captives and herself. She plodded resignedly through the green aisles where only the sudden crow of a jungle-cock startled the silence, while the man astride her neck directed her by the touch of his bare feet swinging under her big ears or by a blow of the iron goad on her skull if she were slow to obey him. When he saw a tree that suited his purpose he halted her under it. Then, standing on her bare back, he drew the heavy curved knife in his girdle and hacked at the branches within reach until he had a pile of them lying on the ground, while Jhansi contentedly munched the trusses of long grass swept up by her trunk into her mouth. The mahout moved her a score of yards into the thick undergrowth of tangled bushes reaching half-way up her body, and stopped her under another tree. He was raising his arm to cut off a bough when he suddenly paused. A crashing some distance away broke the stillness of the forest. He turned apprehensively to look in the direction

of the noise, which continued and drew nearer, as if some heavy body were forcing its way rapidly through the blind tangle of twisted creepers, saplings, and matted giant vegetation.

To the man the sounds meant only one thing, wild elephants, and, like all jungle-dwellers, he feared them greatly. Suddenly he caught sight of the approaching animal. He had judged rightly. It was an elephant, and his fright became panic when he saw to his horror that it had only one tusk. It was coming straight towards him. The marvellous power of scent that its race possesses had enabled the brute to locate Jhansi from a distance, and it seemed to know that she was domesticated and so a traitor to her kind. For although she was a female, it was coming straight at her with trunk curled, ears and tail cocked for the charge, and the light of battle in its small eyes.

The mahout did not hesitate an instant. He dared a thing that should have spelt death for him, but instead proved his salvation. He flung himself off Jhansi's back to the ground and wriggled away through the undergrowth like a snake. It was a mad action; for had the oncoming rogue seen him and given chase, his annihilation under its great feet would have been merely a matter of seconds. But, like that of most big animals, its sight was bad, and it did not wind the man. Its attention was riveted on the bewildered Jhansi, who, with all a tame elephant's fear of wild ones, was panic-stricken and did not know what to do, whether to stand or to run. Used to having her thinking done for her by her mahout, she was helpless without him in an emergency.

Ordinarily a male would not attack a female; but this vicious rogue hated all the world and, cowardly bully that he was, preferred to have to deal with one of the weaker sex rather than a stout tusker who might be more than a match for him. So, as the terrified Jhansi stood irresolute, he charged her fiercely and with such violence that, turning too late to flee, she was hurled to the ground by his weight and the impetus of his rush. As she went down before him he drove six inches of his single tusk into the small of her back—luckily for her, at an angle that prevented his inflicting a dangerous wound.

As with a wild scream of pain and fright the cow-elephant was sent sprawling on her outstretched trunk, the rogue drew back a

few yards to gather speed for a fresh charge. But Jhansi, despite her size and weight, was as active as a cat. Taking advantage of the momentary respite, she scrambled to her feet and, trumpeting shrilly, rushed madly away through the forest. In blind panic she burst through stout creepers as if they were pack-thread, thick saplings were uprooted and branches broken off, high bushes and small trees trampled flat, as she hurled herself headlong in terror through the undergrowth, which nevertheless somewhat checked her pace and allowed her assailant to catch her up. Unable to head her off and stop her, he galloped close at her tail, jabbing at her hindquarters viciously with his single tusk. If any obstacle had halted her for a few seconds, she would have been lost; for the rogue was much heavier and stronger than she, and, had he got her down a second time, would not have allowed her to escape again. Crushing her with his weight and stabbing her with his sharp weapon, he would undoubtedly have killed her.

But Fortune favoured her. She burst suddenly from the impeding undergrowth into open forest where the ground between the boles of the giant trees was clear or only covered with low bracken and grass. *Meergas* are generally long-legged brutes, and Jhansi was exceptionally fast, although all elephants are surprisingly speedy when they like. And free now to take advantage of her pace, she soon galloped clear away from her slower pursuer, who then gave up the hopeless chase.

Near the *peelkhana* Khartoum and Dundora were lying on their sides, enjoying the ministrations of their slaves, the coolies, who were performing their toilet and, with the aid of a brick and a bucket of water, were scrubbing and massaging them, while the mahouts, squatting on their heels, were gossiping with the non-commissioned officer of the guard. On this peaceful scene burst Jhansi, blood-bedaubed and terrified, and at sight of her the men were seized with panic. Mahouts and coolies scattered and rushed for trees, while the soldier ran to the guardroom for his rifle, and he and the sentry prepared to do battle with the wild elephant that all instantly divined to be the cause of her flight and expected to see following her.

But home again in the familiar surroundings her fright grew less, and she stopped in the centre of the clearing, looked about her and then walked over to her two

companions to tell them in elephant language of her adventure. But she got no sympathy from them, apparently; they paid no attention to her, and lay stretched out awaiting the resumption of their toilet. After a while the mahouts and coolies, seeing that the expected rogue did not appear, came timidly towards her and examined her. The conical wounds on her body showed that they were right in assuming that she had been attacked by an elephant, and the fact that the punctures were single proved the identity of her assailant.

"*Ek dhant-wallah! Budmash! (The single-tusker! The Rogue!)*" the men exclaimed in terrified accents, pointing to the bleeding wounds.

Then, as the wife and children of the missing mahout came running out of their hut to inquire after him, his comrades, with the ready pessimism of the East, assured them that he must be dead. Loud was the wailing, but an hour afterwards grief was turned into joy as a terrified man in rags, his skin everywhere scratched by the innumerable thorns of the jungle, staggered into the clearing. It was the missing one. So scared was he that he positively refused to accompany his elephant when, under escort of two armed sepoy, she was marched up the hill that afternoon to be shown to the Commandant.

That officer, with the native hospital assistant who was the nearest approach to a doctor that the post possessed at the time, cleansed and dressed Jhansi's wounds, the elephant accepting their ministrations with evident gratitude, in spite of the fresh pain they caused her. And, placed on the sick list for over a fortnight, she was brought up for treatment to the little dispensary of the Fort by the native surgeon, while the Commandant, on Khartoum's back, was scouring the forest for miles round in search of her assailant.

But the rogue was not met with. The elephant attendants breathed freely again, believing that he had left the district, and ventured once more to take their animals into the forest to graze or to collect and bring back the leafy branches for their rations in the *peelkhana*. It was evident that Jhansi had not got over her fright, for she was exceedingly nervous and apprehensive whenever she left the stable where only she seemed to feel safe. Her wounds were quite healed when one day, as there was no work for them, she and her companions were ridden out by their coolies to

feed in the forest. This was a treat that the big animals enjoyed as children do a picnic. Hobbled by iron shackles on their hind legs, so that they would not wander far, they were allowed to loaf about, tearing down creepers, breaking off branches and eating the leaves, uprooting saplings, grazing at their ease; while their men sat smoking and talking, now and then calling to their charges if they showed a tendency to get out of hearing—I do not say sight, because in that thick undergrowth even an elephant was invisible at ten yards.

The animals knew what was expected of them, however, and they never attempted to stray. So the men left them to their own devices and went back on foot to their huts to their midday meal. This was contrary to all orders; but they had often done it before and never failed to find their charges where they had left them.

But once more the unexpected happened, and when hours afterwards they came back, Jhansi had disappeared. Her coolie discovered on the ground her shackles, which, it was evident, he had not fastened properly. The elderly matrons Khartoum and Dundora were feeding placidly, but their untrustworthy young companion was nowhere to be seen. When looking for her the men came across signs of the passage of a small herd of wild elephants between the tame ones and the *peelkhana* and only a short distance away from the grazing-ground; and then they found Jhansi's tracks, showing evidence of rapid flight and heading in a bee-line in the opposite direction from home. It was apparent that she had been frightened by the wild elephants and, remembering her recent unpleasant experience, had shaken off her shackles and bolted in panic. Mounting Dundora and Khartoum, the men followed her for some distance, and then, despairing of overtaking her, returned home sadly, knowing that they would be blamed for her loss.

They were right. The Commandant used strong words to them for leaving their charges contrary to orders, and cut Jhansi's coolie's pay. Then, reporting her disappearance by telegram to the brigade headquarters at Shillong in Assam, he descended to the forest with rifle and food, and began a search for the runaway which lasted for weeks without result.

What had happened to the Runaway Girl?

Jhansi's painful experience with the rogue had very greatly increased the dread with which domesticated elephants regard wild

ones. And so, as the coolies had judged rightly, when the herd had passed near her and her companions, and the breeze bore their scent to her, she was stricken with panic. If one had so hurt her, what would a score or more do? She did not wait to see. As mad with terror she strained at her shackles, they opened suddenly and she found herself unexpectedly free. She thought only of getting as far away from these terrible foes as possible; and, since they lay between her and her stable, she fled blindly in the opposite direction.

On between the great boles of the giant teak and sal trees, trampling down the high bracken, crashing through dense brakes of tall bushes covered with white bell-shaped flowers and tangled thorny plants, she rushed madly. The undergrowth grew denser. Hanging creepers swung festooned from tree to tree, twisting around the trunks and writhing like snakes about each other, criss-crossed, intermingled in inextricable confusion. The terrified elephant burst through all. A looped liana thick as a ship's cable caught her across the chest. Unchecked she carried it away, tearing it from its hold and dragging it down in a shower of leaves, while a cloud of large red ants, shaken from the bending branches, fell on her back and angrily sank their poisonous jaws into her thick but soft skin. The pain of their bites only spurred her on.

A band of little brown monkeys dozing in the tree-tops in the noontide heat, noses on bent knees, woke up in affright as she crashed noisily beneath them, and scattered in frantic leaps away in every direction, the babies holding fast to their mothers' bodies. A drowsy sambhur stag hidden in the blackest shade of the undergrowth sprang to alarmed activity and dashed away in terror at sight of her panic. Two trim little barking-deer, a buck and his mate, feeding in an open glade, bounded off with a loud "honk" as the scared elephant rushed wildly by and plunged into the thick cover on the far side, almost trampling underfoot a jungle-cock with his bevy of brown hens, which rocketed into the air with a chorus of wild cackling that aroused a bewildered giant owl in a hollow tree and sent him blundering in blind-eyed fright.

Startling all the jungle, Jhansi rushed on in unreasoning panic. A sudden whiff of the scent of wild elephant from another group of the large and widely scattered herd to which the first lot had belonged sent her off at a tangent; and she fled on towards the

densest part of the Terai, the southern belt where the water from the mountains which sinks into the ground at their feet rises again to the surface. There in the damp soil the jungle riots in mad profusion. Great thorny cane-brakes, a solid array of thick bamboo clumps, tall tree-ferns studded with cruel hooks, and everywhere an unbelievable tangle of creepers, deny hasty passage to even such big beasts as elephants and rhinoceroses, and Jhansi's pace was necessarily checked. She blundered into a morass hidden by the tropical vegetation, and only with difficulty dragged her body to firm soil.

Then at last she stopped, blown, exhausted, her sides heaving, the blood pumping fast through her immense frame, and rested hidden deep in a dense growth of tiger-grass twelve feet high, its feathery plumes waving six feet higher still. Trembling and still terrified, she stood motionless for hours, fancying her enemies on her track, hearing their stealthy approach in every sound that disturbed the silence of the jungle. A burning thirst assailed her, but, although in this region of streams there was water everywhere, she did not venture out of her hiding-place to quench it. Hunger tormented her, but she dared not raise her trunk to pull the overhanging grasses, lest the noise and movement should betray her. Even when darkness fell on the forest she still remained concealed; and not until midnight, when she knew that wild elephants would be sleeping, did she steal out to find food and drink, scurrying into cover again when at dawn a shrill trumpeting sounded loud through the sleeping forest and told that they were astir once more.

About her the world awoke. The jungle-fowl flew down from the high boughs, and while the hens scratched up the leaves and wasted no time in searching for food, the truculent little cocks stood a-tiptoe and challenged the universe with noisy crowing. They disturbed the slumbers of the monkeys huddled on the topmost branches, and, angry at being awakened early, they squabbled ill-temperedly and scratched and bit their neighbours until, sleep driven from their eyes, they all swung away through the airy green lanes and went their ways. The deer, released from their wakeful guard of the night by the sun that sent the murderous prowlers skulking home to hide from the light of day, relaxed their watchfulness and wandered through the open glades to feed. The great owl came home

to roost in a hollow, orchid-draped tree, and the little birds sang their morning hymn of thanks that they had been spared from his clutches to see daylight again.

But Jhansi hid through the morning hours until the wild elephants rested during the noontide heat.

Then the hag-ridden fugitive stole silently through the forest in her senseless flight that took her further and further from home. Frequently some real or fancied noise turned her in a fresh direction—some sudden crack that sounded like the slap of a sleeping tusker's big ear lifted and let fall again, a crashing that seemed to tell of boughs torn down by wild elephants, and yet was only the flight of a troop of monkeys through the branches. Her progress through the denser jungle was slow; but before long she saw light between the trees and came suddenly to the southern edge of the great forest, where its ragged fringe borders the open, fertile plains of Eastern Bengal, which stretch away with never a hillock or rock to the broad flood of the Ganges and across it to the city of Calcutta three hundred miles away. The open daunted her, and she turned back into the jungle again, her head pointed eastward towards Assam.

And thus for days she wandered on, always further away from the *peelkhana*, ever obsessed by the haunting fear of her own kind that made her alter the course of her flight whenever the faint breeze brought her the scent of some of the scattered troops of wild elephants that fill the Terai, or even of a solitary individual of them. But gradually this fear grew less intense, and then her uppermost feeling was bewilderment, the bewilderment of a lost child. For from her early youth she had been used to being fended for, fed, taken out to work, brought back again, groomed, washed, her life ordered for her, and now liberty in this unknown forest left her helpless. Picture an elderly spinster lady, brought up from childhood in a little country village where every face was familiar, waited on, every want anticipated, never allowed to think for herself, dictated to by her relatives, suddenly taken out of her familiar surroundings, transported to some big city like London, and there left to struggle for herself. Imagine her bewilderment, her helplessness.

So it was with Jhansi. She felt utterly lost without her men to feed her, to bring drink to her, to take her out and fetch her in, to order her comings and her goings.

Like many a woman she missed her slavery. It was strange to wander all day long at her own whim. Always she expected to hear her mahout's voice calling her back. Used to the safe harbour of her stable at sunset, she was terrified when darkness fell and she found herself out in the jungle without a refuge. She felt so alone. To the tame animal that she had become the night in the forest was full of menace. Every sound threatened danger. The weird wailing of the great owls wheeling against the stars hidden from her by the canopy of leaves overhead frightened her, often as she had heard the eerie sounds from her stall in the *peelkhana*. The harsh cry of a barking-deer warning the jungle of a tiger's presence startled her as she drowsed on her feet. For she never dared lie down.

But the brassy trumpeting of a wild elephant in the dark hours scared her into flight, and she started to run, stopped bewildered by the blackness to which she was unused, then fled, blundering into trees and breaking off branches, shattering the silence, and terrifying herself all the more by the noise that she made.

At first she slept only in the hot midday hours, and at night was as wakeful and timid as the deer for whom Death then stalks on softly-falling foot. Many days went by before she saw one of her own race, although there were so many in the forest depths. But always on the alert against them, at the faintest sound or scent of them—and an elephant can wind another two or three miles off—she fled from the chance of meeting any.

Apparently it never occurred to her to turn back towards the *peelkhana*. Some strange impulse persistently drove her on and on away from it. Probably her unlucky adventure with the rogue and the presence of the herd so near her stable made its neighbourhood seem dangerous. Day after day passed, and always she went on in the opposite direction. She crossed swift-flowing rivers with consummate ease, for her race are perhaps the best swimmers in the animal world. She came on hamlets of grass-walled huts, and once or twice on huge clearings in the jungle where long lines of tidy, low green bushes, iron-roofed buildings with high chimneys and white bungalows, told of tea-gardens replacing the ages-old forest. But she turned aside hastily from the abodes of men, since men had failed her, had proved unable to guard her against her foes.





"As she went down before him he drove six inches of his single tusk into the small of her back."



Sometimes her blind wandering led through open glades of green bracken under huge trees, the great limbs of which were matted with glossy-leaved orchids gay with long trails of mauve and white blossoms. Sometimes she followed narrow tracks through dense cane-brakes, tracks made by generations of her own kind, sometimes she pushed her way through a maze of stout creepers and undergrowth taller than herself, yet dwarfed by the giant teak trees that rose majestically from it. She slid and stumbled down the steep banks of streams, scaring into the water an otter basking in the sun on a rock, or into the air a group of long-legged white wading-birds.

Once in thick vegetation she all but trod on the shining body of a yellow-banded king-cobra, eighteen feet long, swiftly writhing across her path, and, checking aghast with fright, turned and fled from the terrible serpent, which, luckily for Jhansi, was busily pursuing some prey and paid no attention to her.

As the weeks went by she began to lose her fear of the jungle and grow used to the life of the wild, to fending for herself instead of being tended by her men, to the shelter of a bamboo clump or leafy trees instead of her stable. Just as the spinster lady torn from the quiet existence of a country village and thrown into the rush, turmoil and loneliness of London life, bewildered at first, learns to accustom herself to it, becomes modernised, grows young again, wears smart toilettes, joins a ladies' club, perhaps, and in the end delights in her emancipation, so Jhansi, roaming or lazing at her own sweet will, commenced to forget the past and like her new mode of living. It was pleasant to toil no more, to wander when and where she wished in the deep cool shadow of the forest instead of on the foot-blistering road, to stop and drowse away the hot hours of the day instead of climbing wearily up the hills with a heavy load in the scorching sun—pleasant to be free at last after an age of servitude that had long ago blotted out the memory of the liberty of the early years of her life.

Her first meeting with one of her own race occurred one day when, as she dozed standing under a tree at noon, a bull-elephant blundered on her. Roused to instant flight, she bolted through the forest for miles before she realised that he was not pursuing her. Then later she came unperceived to the edge of an open space in which a small party of elephants, cows with their

calves, were feeding. Curiosity held her, and, being safe down wind, she watched them for a long time with interest before stealing away with a silent tread astonishing in so large and clumsy an animal.

Another time a herd fifty strong, marching in single file and moving steadily with a set purpose that prevented them loitering, passed by her; and, grown bolder, she came out of concealment to watch them. But they paid no heed to her, except that two or three raised their trunks and extended them inquiringly in her direction to get her scent; and the long line passed on its way. A few similar encounters helped to lessen, if not altogether remove, her dread of the wild ones of her race; and so one day she ventured to draw near a group of elephants feeding. They paid little attention to her. One female with a young calf made a threatening move towards her, lest the stranger should have evil designs against her little one; but, finding that Jhansi was not approaching it, she turned away and continued to graze.

The fugitive, driven by loneliness, attached herself in a way to this group—that is, without actually joining it, she kept in its neighbourhood, following the others as they moved slowly on, feeding as they went, and halting when they stopped to repose during the day or night. The wild elephants got used to seeing or scenting her, and accepted her; and when they joined up with their herd they seemed to vouch for her, so that no hostility was shown her. Had she wished, she would have found little difficulty in joining one of the many groups that went to compose the main body; but she still regarded these wild kindred of hers with suspicion and kept her distance from them.

For months she wandered with them, ranging far and wide, climbing up the mountains into the little-known country of Bhutan. There they roamed through a lovely land of deep valleys filled with tangled jungle under snow-tipped hills, of grassy uplands, of dark and gloomy ravines where, high above the rushing torrents roaring among the great boulders, hung iron chain suspension bridges built hundreds of years before by long-forgotten Chinese engineers. The various groups of elephants, each composed of animals allied by family ties, that made up the herd, which numbered nearly a hundred, wandered through forests of maple, silver fir and larch, through vast areas of tall flowering rhododendrons,

They passed in single file along paths leading under cliffs of pure white crystalline limestone shining in the sun like purest marble and echoing the booming cry of the silvery-haired langur apes. Spring had come, and the high meadows, ten thousand feet above sea-level, were gay with mauve and white iris, yellow pansies, blue - and - white anemones, small yellow roses and large white ones ; apricot, pear, and orange trees were in blossom, and young green clothed the oaks and chestnuts. In the forests of the low valleys they trampled on beautiful orchids as they fed.

Yet with it all Jhansi was not happy. Strange to say, freedom palled. Even with scores of her own kind around her she was lonely. She missed the familiar things, the friendly presence of her two companions for years, the daily routine that had once seemed so irksome, the soothing slap of her coolie's hand as he groomed her, the cheery voices of the sepoys, and the dainty tit-bits with which they fed her, even the angry tones of her mahout, just as a woman suddenly freed from the wearisome round of domestic toil and set adrift on the world as her own mistress, yet may weary of her liberty, and to her own surprise begin to hanker after the customary existence with its ties and its compensations.

And so when the herd drifted slowly southward again down the mountains and entered India by one of the *duars* or passes, not far from where the white picket towers on the neighbouring hill-tops looked down on the dark-walled fort of Buxa, a strange homesickness assailed the exile. Something seemed to call her, to tug at her heart-strings. The companionship of the wild elephants became distasteful.

And one day an unpleasant happening made it unbearable. In grazing she had unconsciously wandered near a five-months-old calf that had strayed from its mother, who, impatiently searching for it, came on Jhansi and, inspired by a sudden unreasoning jealousy, furiously attacked her. She was a strong, heavily-built animal and, being young, had not yet lost the white tusks in the upper jaw that in the female elephant correspond to the tusks of the male and generally get broken off early in life. She charged Jhansi savagely, stabbing her with the sharp ivory points and trying to bear her down. Two or three of her companions joined with her against the stranger and hustled and buffeted the poor beast until in despair she fled out of their reach.

This completed the disgust that Jhansi had begun to feel for the savage life, and restored in full her former fear and hatred of her wild kindred. So she turned her back on the herd and resolutely journeyed away from its vicinity.

Eight months had elapsed since Jhansi's disappearance, and the Commandant, like everyone else, had long ago given up all hope of ever finding her. But one day her mahout came to him full of excitement. He declared that at feeding time that morning, when the fodder for Khartoum and Dundora was being carried into their stalls in the *peelkhana*, an elephant suddenly appeared at the edge of the clearing and stood watching the process. It was Jhansi—he was sure of it. Seizing ropes, he and the other mahouts ran to secure her, but at their coming she turned back into the jungle.

Now, the Commandant knew something about elephants, so he bade the man, if ever the runaway reappeared, carry food ostentatiously into her stall.

And the very next day at meal-time she came into the clearing and watched the men carrying the fodder into the stable. Jhansi's mahout hurriedly seized a bundle of leafy branches and deposited it in her empty stall. Then all the men, quivering with excitement, waited to see what would happen. They had little faith in their officer's plan.

To their amazement, Jhansi—for it was indeed she—walked calmly to the *peelkhana*, went to her stall and began to eat. The Prodigal Daughter had returned !

Her trembling mahout crept into the next standing, occupied by Dundora, slipped under her belly, and with shaking fingers clasped the long-disused iron shackles around Jhansi's legs. She paid no attention to him, but calmly continued her meal. Her old companions did not even turn their heads to look at her.

But among the men the excitement was tremendous. The fugitive's mahout and coolie, their livelihood restored, wept openly, surrounded by their rejoicing families ; while the other elephant attendants and the guard warmly congratulated them, but advised them to watch their charge very closely in the future.

There was no need for it. The runaway had tasted liberty and it was bitter in her mouth. This freedom, this vaunted freedom, was but dust and ashes. Henceforth the sheltered life for her.

Now, this is a true story. I was the Commandant and I know,



"Evidence in defence of the red-haired man's remark stared forth from the sketch-book which he held in his hand."

# GATE-MONEY

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

**T**HE young man with red hair observed that Miss Jean Hardcastle was a little demon.

Looking at the damsel in question, as she sat cross-legged on the grass and thoughtfully endeavoured to clean a smudge of red crayon off her fingers on the curly back of the red-haired man's retriever, you might have thought the statement both inaccurate and uncalled for. The big hazel-green eyes, set wide apart in a small heart-shaped face, sun-burned a clear rosy tan, the poise of the little head of smooth nut-brown hair, were as demure as you please. The curve of the red mouth was serious, almost angelic. Yet—

Evidence in defence of the red-haired man's remark stared forth from the sketch-book which he held in his hand, open upon that page which bore a cruelly clever caricature of himself, executed in red and black crayon.

The artist looked up at Oliver Bagot with wide, reflective eyes. "Yours is better than Hughie's, I think," she observed dispassionately.

"What?"

"Ralph's is the best, on the whole. He was easier. And Colonel Ash. They're before yours. Yours was the last I did."

Oliver Bagot turned back the pages and so beheld, on each of the three preceding that which bore his own unkind likeness, similar presentations of the other three men who constituted the immediate neighbourhood's quota of eligible bachelordom. And although these did not provoke in him quite so much indignation and resentment, he was generous enough to repeat his original remark.

"They make one see them like that," said Miss Hardcastle pensively.

Oliver Bagot became slowly and evenly red of countenance. That tactful "they" could not disguise the fact that he himself was of the company alluded to. Miss Hardcastle, moreover, had evinced no particular reluctance in showing him her art; she had been engaged in putting the finishing touches to his own portrait when he had appeared upon the scene, and when the enthusiastic greeting of the retriever had hurled the sketch-book from her lap, she had betrayed not the slightest embarrass-

ment at Oliver Bagot's rescue of it, open at that incriminating page.

With perfect serenity she had observed his recognition of himself in the spirited crayon sketch of a very long-legged man mounted on a very short-legged polo pony; the red crayon lent a lifelike touch to the rider's hair and the pony's mane and tail. Oliver Bagot was depicted as sitting facing the latter appendage, and about the whole was a sort of absurdly brilliant verisimilitude that must inevitably have provoked a laugh at the model's expense.

Oliver Bagot, it seemed, found no consolation in the fact that Hughie (with an enormous cricket bat), Ralph (sailing a toy boat on a pond), and Colonel Ash (entangled in the line of his trout rod) shared his fate. He returned to the contemplation of his own portrait, and observed drily that if Ginger's hocks really looked like that, it wouldn't be much use riding him in to-morrow's gymkhana. There was a touch of acrimony in his voice, but Jean met it with a gurgle of laughter.

"Why, it's you and Ginger that are going to make it a success, Noll! We wouldn't have got it up, but for your promising to take part. Lady Violet did suggest a flower show, but Daddy and I both thought we'd make far more money for the Convalescent Home this way. It's more of a novelty for the neighbourhood—they have a flower show over at Mellbury—and we've had two cricket matches and a concert. And, anyway, I believe we'll get a lot of people over. Bill and I have taken posters for miles around, and there are a lot of people staying about for—for the fishing, I suppose."

She finished this somewhat impetuous speech with a pink flush on each cheek, which Oliver Bagot did not fail to observe. He looked at Jean rather hard as he returned the sketch-book, and then he said slowly: "There's a fellow staying at 'The White Hart' at Mellbury. Does he fish?"

"I don't know. I mean, I haven't seen him," said Miss Hardcastle rather tartly.

"You must have seen him. He's been about for at least a fortnight," objected Oliver Bagot.

To which Jean replied with dignity that what she meant was that she hadn't seen him fishing.

"Did you give him a poster for the gymkhana?" inquired Oliver idly, pulling the retriever's ears. "I hope he'll come.

He'd make another subject for these crayons of yours, wouldn't he?"

The pink in Jean's cheeks deepened to poppy red. "There is nothing in the least funny about *him*," she said coldly.

Oliver Bagot said nothing.

When he had gone, she remained seated on the grass with the sketch-book and the crayons, and presently, opening on a fresh page, she began to draw. But the portrait that grew beneath her deft fingers was quite unlike those preceding it. It held no hint of caricature, but presented a man's countenance, good-looking in a way that was rather strong and fine. An observer might have noted that Miss Hardcastle drew with so very little hesitation that the subject must either have been well studied or else had made some considerable impression upon the artist's memory.

Jean had encountered the "fellow staying at 'The White Hart' at Mellbury" perhaps half a dozen times; she had long since decided that he represented an ideal to which neither Noll Bagot nor Colonel Ash, Hughie nor Ralph could ever hope to attain. Being a practical damsel, she had also decided that she would like to meet the ideal in question—in a word, Miss Jean Hardcastle had lost her heart to an unknown hero as thoroughly as any sentimental flapper (which she was not) could ever have done.

She was somewhat unreasonably disconcerted that Oliver Bagot should have introduced the subject that afternoon. That he should have alluded to the Ideal as "the fellow staying at 'The White Hart'" only showed how lacking in perception was Oliver Bagot, and that he should have voiced that outrageous proposition anent the Ideal's possibilities as a subject for caricature was the final touch in the alienation of Miss Hardcastle's sympathies from the master of Ginger.

Jean, regretfully aware that she couldn't do the Ideal justice, turned back the pages for further contemplation of Oliver Bagot and Ginger, from which, it appeared, she derived more satisfaction. After a pause—

"I am *glad*," she said defiantly, "that he saw it—awfully glad!"

Jean Hardcastle was a truthful damsel.

\* \* \* \* \*

The possibility that the Ideal might terminate his sojourn at "The White Hart" immediately after—or even before—to-morrow's gymkhana was a distracting thought. Tentative inquiries did not elicit much concerning the Ideal's movements or

identity, beyond the fact that he was known at Mellbury as Captain Corringham, and had been heard to remark that he might stay there a week or six.

The touch of mystery lent an added charm in the way mysteries have, though from a practical point of view it had its disadvantages, since no one in the neighbourhood seemed likely to present her Ideal to Miss Hardcastle in the conventional and orthodox way.

There remained the unconventional and unorthodox; but then Jean, as has been stated, was demure of countenance.

Thus the morning of the gymkhana arrived with affairs having advanced no forrader. Oliver Bagot, looking almost as long and lean and red-haired in the August sunlight as in the pages of Jean's sketch-book, was combating Ginger's noted objection to the full blast of the local band when Jean herself appeared, cool and charming in primrose linen and a mushroom hat, in company with her father and Colonel Ash, both of whom were decorated with the flaunting green rosette of stewardship. She came across to him, but reserved three-fourths of her greeting for Ginger, in respect of whose antipathies the drum had suspended operations and the trombone was endeavouring to play *sotto voce*.

"And you've entered him for the musical chairs event!" said Jean, watching Ginger cake-walk to the strains of "Swanee River" played slightly out of tune. Oliver Bagot, whose skill was unstudied and irrefutable, was understood to remark that Ginger would settle down presently, when he got used to the thing.

In support of which hopeful theory, Ginger allowed himself to be cajoled into moving a few paces nearer the rope enclosing the band's pitch, when the drum, cautiously

returning to action at Oliver's own request, proved too much for the pony's nerves. He swerved against the rope with a flourish that caused the cornet, a thin young man who, it appeared, shared his susceptibilities, to retreat hastily to cover behind the drum, and completing his iniquities by a good attempt at bolting into the small crowd that had already arrived to justify Jean's forecast of the charitable effort's success.

From beneath the brim of the mushroom



"And you've entered him for the musical chairs event!" said Jean."

hat Jean's serious, hazel-green eyes were subjecting the crowd's component parts to a swift and searching review that failed to discover the presence of the Ideal. People continued to arrive, and Bill, Jean's school-boy brother, who had volunteered to take the "gate," found the glory of his officialdom

somewhat tempered by the fact that it prevented his witnessing events within the roped-in arena.

Oliver Bagot and Ginger had entered for most of the events, and Oliver Bagot and Ginger were the dual heroes of Bill's

So in the cause of charity Miss Hardcastle turned her back on the exploits of Ginger—who had not "settled down"—and took the place of the grateful Bill.

Four minutes later a small grey car backed into place up the side lane that



"Oliver Bagot . . . was understood to remark that Ginger would settle down presently, when he got used to the thing."

young enthusiasm. Jean, noticing the boy's longing glances at the backs of the crowd around the rope, slipped across to him and offered to take his place for a time. The press was over, but late-comers were still arriving in a number that augured well for Lady Violet's Convalescent Home.

branched from the road bordering the gymkhana field, and its late occupant, a trim grey-suited figure, came towards Jean's official station under the ash tree by the gate. Jean, clutching the roll of pink ticket slips with tense fingers, met the glance of Captain Corringham, the Ideal.

The inspiration came in a flash. At five minutes past three the Ideal had deposited a Treasury note on the small table before Miss Hardcastle, who was in the act of tearing off his pink ticket with slightly shaky fingers. At five minutes and six seconds past three Miss Hardcastle had picked up the Treasury note, scrutinised it intently, and informed the Ideal that she couldn't take it.

For a moment the Ideal stared at her in what Jean might have thought exaggerated consternation, had she been less concerned with her own temerity. He thrust his hand into his pocket, brought it away empty, and said :

"By Jove, I'm awfully sorry—that's all I've got with me. I hadn't looked at it—they gave it me in the post office at Mellbury. To think of it's being a dud!" He frowned, then looked at Jean with a whimsical smile. "What shall we do about it?"

"Oh"—Jean wondered if he could hear the beating of her heart—"there's only one thing to be done. It's not your fault, and—and you can't be turned away. You must let me lend you the entrance half-crown. You can—you can send it to me later."

"That's awfully sporting of you," Corringham's blue eyes echoed the appreciation of his really attractive voice. "I—I am staying over at Mellbury—at 'The White Hart.' My name's Corringham—John Corringham."

Jean, proffering the pink ticket in exchange for her own half-crown, said in rather a small voice that hers was Jean Hardcastle. The enormity of her action was beginning to assail her. She had a sudden, irrational, and disconcerting wonder as to the comment of Oliver Bagot should he learn that, in order to achieve the Ideal's acquaintance, she had falsely accused him of offering counterfeit money, thus creating the opportunity of lending him half-a-crown. At the moment she did not realise the way Fate had abetted her in that the Ideal should have no other note or coin with him; she was only vaguely aware of bestowing tickets upon several more people, in whose money, it may be noted, she evinced not the slightest interest.

A quiet and very ordinary-looking man, standing some paces away and apparently engaged in conversation with the owner of a black pony, *did* note this. As he bent to examine the pony's fetlock, his countenance was crossed by a swift expression of astonishment and admiration that had

nothing to do with the excellence of this point of equine anatomy.

A few moments later Bill returned to his post.

"I've seen the balloon race, and the polo bending, and the first heat of the Gretna Green race," he said enthusiastically. "And Ginger's madder'n ever. Now it's your turn, Jean. Thanks awf'ly."

Miss Hardcastle, turning in the direction of the crowd, found that Captain John Corringham had waited for her. Together they found a point of vantage whence the antics of Ginger could be comfortably observed. That it also provided Ginger's rider—who had really been hateful yesterday—with equal opportunity of observing Miss Hardcastle and Captain Corringham, was a point, of course, of minor importance. Ginger's temper, instead of abating, was rapidly approaching concert pitch. Having won three events, he evidently considered his duty done. Following his third success, he came by the rope where Corringham and Jean were standing, in a series of bucks that effectually limited Oliver Bagot's glance in their direction. Nevertheless, it was not the pony's behaviour that caused the frown on Oliver Bagot's countenance.

Captain Corringham continued to fill the rôle of Ideal with charming ease. In the intervals of expressing intelligent interest in the exploits of Ginger and his rivals, he conversed with Miss Hardcastle upon divers subjects. So Jean, thrusting aside that provoking misgiving as to what Oliver Bagot would say, prepared, in company with the Ideal, to enjoy the next event on the programme—"Musical Chairs."

The catastrophe was brought about by Ginger's old enemy, the drum. As the latter came into action, the pony stood up on end, made a bolting swerve for the rope—from which the spectators swerved in sympathy—tried to jump it, failed, and fell, pitching Oliver Bagot heavily forward on his shoulder.

It was the quiet and very ordinary man who had overheard Jean's transaction with the Ideal at the gate who was now the first at Oliver Bagot's side. But Miss Hardcastle was a good second. So that from seeing constellations Oliver Bagot saw next the crooked brim of a mushroom hat, beneath which was a small, pale, heart-shaped face framing two very scared hazel-green eyes.

The Ideal was forgotten as completely as if he did not exist. As Oliver Bagot got

on to his long legs, not without an involuntary clutch at the quiet and ordinary man's shoulder, his left arm hung limp at his side. Miss Harcastle gave a little cry.

"Oh, Noll, darling, you're hurt!"

From which it would appear that Oliver Bagot, after all, represented more than a mere subject for caricature.

Into his assurances that it was only his collar-bone, the voice of the quiet and ordinary man cut crisply, addressing Miss Harcastle, who, it seemed, found no fault in the fact that Oliver Bagot had transferred his grasp from the quiet and ordinary man's shoulder to her own hand.

"You handled him almighty smart," said the quiet and ordinary man admiringly. "But—how did you know?"

Jean stared at him in pardonable bewilderment. Then it dawned upon her that there were a few other people in the world besides Oliver Bagot, and that the question referred to Captain John Corringham.

"We've been trying to get hold of him for months, and I think this time we've succeeded," said the quiet and ordinary man. "There are two of us here from the Yard, and I see my colleague has already made acquaintance with Captain John Corringham." He nodded in the direction of two men who were leaving the gymkhana field apparently arm-in-arm. "Well, he's sense enough to know the game's up. He's been a bit careless lately. There's only two others in the besides himself, and he's the chief."

"The chief what?" demanded Oliver Bagot.

The detective laughed.

"Chief of a gang of counterfeiters, sir. We've been watching this neighbourhood for a week. But it was the young lady gave us the clue by spotting the dud note, though it beats me how she knew. That was a good move, miss, lending him the entrance half-crown, so's to keep him in sight, so to speak. But you ought to get that collar-bone attended to, sir. Congratulate you on a fine performance. That pony of yours, now——"

His tone betrayed the enthusiasm for things equine that lurked behind the badge of Scotland Yard

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour later Oliver Bagot, with one arm in a sling and the other employed in assisting Miss Harcastle to walk from the yard to Ginger's loose-box, said in bewildered tones:

"But, darling, how *did* you know the note was forged?"

"I didn't," said Miss Harcastle unhappily. "I—you see—I just wanted to—to meet him, and all in a moment I thought of that way. It was—it was amusing, rather—only you looked so cross."

"I wanted to knock the blighter down," said Oliver Bagot candidly. Then he looked at her with grave eyes.

"Jean—you don't—mind?"

The hazel-green eyes met his. "I shall burn my sketch-book," said Jean. "When Ginger fell, I knew that—that nobody else counted."

Ginger blinked a bright and cunning eye.

## YOUTH

**T**HY heart haunteth the hills  
Where run heaven-springing rills.

Where spreads the unfathomed sea  
Voices are calling thee.

Their echoes in thee swell,  
Thy breast an ocean shell.

Thy dream-flocks feed on grass  
Where angels alone trespass.

Night drops her starry stair,  
Pinions fanning thy hair.

The dew falls on thine eyes  
That fell in Paradise.

The hollow sky's thy grot,  
The sun thy chariot;

The wind thou wouldst outrun,  
All deserts under sun,

Abyss and tempest, both  
Lion and behemoth

Enlarge thy noble zest,  
For whom even Death's a quest.

THOMAS SHARP.





"Somewhat nervously the man-servant seated himself at the *escritoire*. . . 'Violet and I,' Leonard began, 'would be delighted if you and Marjory would spend a week or so with us. . . This one, by the way, should begin "My dear Mr. and Mrs. Hope,"'"

# ASSISTING LAURA

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

"HOUSE - WARMINGS," Leonard Ventnor was saying, "are seldom a success, particularly when—as you propose in our case—they are extended into a standing invitation to stay the week. Maurice Winchester, whom I saw recently at the club, was telling me of an experience of his own soon after he had married Freda. He was invited to a house-warming and was induced to stay the night. In the morning he discovered that the enamel in the bath had not quite set. He made the discovery too late, and the bath had to be re-enamelled. Not only that——"

"But" interrupted his wife, "'South View' is in perfect repair. Except for Pratt, the servants are installed, and we could

leave this flat at the shortest notice. I think it is quite time we returned a little of the hospitality we received when we were engaged. Certainly we ought to ask the Tewkesburys and Marjory Hope and her parents—and Professor Ferriton. They all come from the same part of Gloucestershire, and would no doubt travel down to Sussex together. And, of course, we should also ask the Winchesters."

"Nevertheless, Violet——" resumed the poet impressively. But at this point his sister intervened. A well-favoured lady of commanding presence, she was several years his senior. She had, up till now, taken no part in the discussion, preserving an attitude which, despite that she was merely

on a flying visit, was too aloof to be quite genuine. The widow of a doctor who had forsaken Harley Street for the life of a country squire in Essex, Mrs. Laura Leaming had inherited property the management of which—since Leonard's marriage nearly a year ago—she had made her chief concern; but her activity often displayed itself in more remarkable forms, sometimes with embarrassing results for her brother, who had once had the humiliation of finding his latest book of poems prominently displayed for sale, in stacks, on a stall at a vicarage garden *fête* organised by his sister.

"I feared," she now remarked, seating herself beside Violet—who was tending a cut forefinger, the result of an accident with a metal paper-knife—on a settee by the fireplace, "that Leonard's attitude would be what it is. In the circumstances, Violet, don't bother to explain how awkwardly I am placed."

"You see, Leonard," continued his wife, "by holding the house-warming—call it house-party, if you like—we shall also be of service, as it happens, to Laura. She is about to employ the decorators at 'Stour View.' They are so busy just now—they always are in March—that she daren't let slip the chance by putting them off. Unfortunately, Laura's nephew, Jack Leaming, was on the point of coming to stay with her for a time. By holding a little party ourselves we could take Jack off her hands for a week or two. Also," added Violet thoughtfully, "if there are one or two younger people in the party, it will not be so dull for Marjory Hope."

Leonard immediately gave way, not so much for Marjory's sake as for Laura's. With Laura custom had inured him to take the line of least resistance. He turned away from the window, through which he had been idly watching the play of the pale afternoon sunlight on the Thames, and addressed his wife.

"I had no idea we could be of assistance to Laura. Naturally I waive any objections. I'll drop a line to Jack to-night."

"You need not go to that trouble, Leonard; I'll write to him myself," said Laura, "if Violet will not object to my using the *escritoire*. I'll also inform the decorators that they can begin to-morrow."

The poet, who disliked writing letters, obligingly opened the *escritoire* and drew up a chair to it, while Laura produced the leather writing-case without which she seldom travelled and extracted from it

several sheets of writing-paper bearing, plainly embossed, her address in mid-Essex. Thus equipped, she settled down at the desk and commenced to write.

By the time she had finished, tea had been brought in, and soon after the meal she terminated her visit.

Violet, who had painfully pencilled the names and addresses of her intended guests on the fly-leaf of a novel, tore out the leaf and handed it to Leonard.

"I shall go with Laura to Liverpool Street," she announced, "while you write to the various people. Invite them for Saturday. The notice is rather short, so we'd better know who's coming as soon as possible. Ask them to reply by wire—here."

Leonard, who had glanced at the list, subsided to the settee. "Aren't you asking a lot of eight bedrooms?" he inquired. "There is room, of course, for a camp-bedstead between the cisterns on the roof, but it's such a long way from the bathroom." "You need not worry," Violet told him; "we shall manage quite comfortably; I've worked it all out. It will be a real house-warming."

"Good-bye, Leonard," said Laura. "I should, of course, have been very pleased to join the party, but this time I intend to see that the decorators do their work properly. As soon as they have finished, I will let you know, and you must ask me down to the new house then."

She kissed him, and, as though to counterbalance this momentary display of impulsiveness, quitted the room in a dignified manner. Her departure would, however, have been more impressive if Leonard had not run after her with the leather writing-case, which she had forgotten.

Left alone, he resumed his seat on the settee until Pratt, the hatchet-faced manservant who had been with him since before his marriage, had removed the tea-things. There being then no further excuse for delaying the writing of the invitations, he picked up the pencilled list of guests and approached the *escritoire*. At the same moment Pratt announced a visitor, and Maurice Winchester was shown into the room.

"Freda," he pronounced, "is going away for a few days to-morrow. I shall be staying at the club."

As he spoke he secured the lower button of his jacket. The action had become instinctive with him ever since he had over-

heard himself described as "a man of middle height with a tendency to stoutness."

"That's a pity," replied Leonard. "I have an idea Violet would have been glad of Freda's presence and experience at the little party we are arranging at the new house on Saturday."

"H'm! It is unlikely that Freda will be back before the Monday. To-day is Tuesday; aren't you cutting things rather fine?"

Leonard explained to his friend, upon whose discretion he had often relied, the object of the house-party.

"I take it," commented Winchester gravely, "that the guests are aware they will also be assisting Laura? Or wasn't that mentioned?"

"The invitations are not yet written," Leonard told him; "I am about to write them now. They will contain no mention of Laura. They will, in fact, be as brief as possible, consistent with cordiality. With you, Maurice, I need make no secret of the fact that I am far from enthusiastic about this project, though I wouldn't have Violet, or Laura, know it for worlds. The whole thing is being done in too great a rush, and it is a toss-up whether Violet's old friends—they are mostly West Country people we are asking—will find it convenient to come at such short notice."

"Take my advice," said Winchester, as he accepted a cigarette, "and omit the word 'house-warming' from the invitations. I suppose, by the way, that the new house will be habitable by Saturday?"

"It is habitable now. It did not, as a matter of fact, stand empty very long. We have, I think, forgotten nothing—not even the headed note-paper, which came to hand this morning."

"Good! Then I'll be getting along. With luck you can catch the country post with the invitations. If I were you, I'd dictate them to Pratt."

This notion seemed an excellent one to the poet, though it surprised Pratt when he learned what was required of him. Somewhat nervously the man-servant seated himself at the *escritoire*.

Meanwhile, Winchester, who had been prevailed upon to await Violet's return, lit another cigarette and sank back upon the settee, while the poet paced the room under the stimulus of thought.

"Violet and I," Leonard began, "would be delighted if you and Marjory would spend a week or so with us, commencing Saturday, at the new address, as above. . ."

This one, by the way, should begin 'My dear Mr. and Mrs. Hope.'"

By the time the last letter was written dusk had fallen, but Leonard, hastily signing each one after a cursory perusal, got Pratt away with them in time for the country post. Ten minutes later the lift brought both Pratt and his mistress up to the flat together.

"I went straight to Kensington from Liverpool Street to see Freda," announced Violet, after greeting Winchester, for whose presence she had been prepared. "She is arranging to come back on Friday evening in order to accompany us down into Sussex on Saturday. I think we shall win, but it is going to be a race between our guests and us."

"In that case," Leonard remarked, with the nearest approach to enthusiasm he had so far evinced, "Maurice will be of the party?"

"Of course," Violet rejoined, flashing a bewitching smile at their visitor. "Freda and I have arranged everything; we shall all travel down together on Saturday."

"I," commented Winchester reflectively, "am invariably the last person to learn of any arrangement made on my behalf. Not that I am grumbling. It just happens that way, that's all."

Later in the week, encountering Leonard at the club of which each of them was a member, Winchester immediately button-holed him.

"Notice once more," he said, "how momentous happenings are brought about by insignificant causes. Some time in the remote past Laura, doubtless in a moment of generous impulse, invited her nephew to come and stay with her. This whim has resulted in the unmaking of history."

"I don't follow."

"Well, on Saturday I shall be travelling down with you into a remote part of Sussex. I had, however, originally considered addressing a political meeting on behalf of Straker, who is going to contest the constituency in the Conservative interest under a banner labelled 'On with the march of civilisation.' As it is, my speech will never be uttered: such influence as I possess will be withheld. To attempt to belittle that influence through false modesty will merely obscure the significance of what I am telling you. Suffice it to say that Straker—his name, by the way, was recently Steinbaumer—will almost certainly forfeit his stake-money. The march of civilisation will receive a check. And it will be due to Laura's

hospitable impulse. Fortunately, Straker has no idea that I proposed addressing one of his meetings; indeed, the pleasure of Mr. Straker's acquaintance—except through the medium of a printed circular—has never been mine. Nevertheless, only the thought that he will not consciously suffer by my change of plan reconciles me to the change."

"I'm glad you are reconciled," returned the poet, "because, that being so, it will hardly affect your state of mind to learn that Jack Leaming will not be coming. Laura has received word that he has fallen from a horse and broken his collar-bone. All the people we wrote to, however, have now wired to say they'll be with us on Saturday. No doubt they will meet on the train and travel across country together. Assuming they lunch in Town, they should be with us shortly after tea-time; we ourselves will arrive in the middle of the afternoon."

"In other words," remarked Winchester, "young Leaming has served his purpose in the scheme of things, and the snowball has commenced to gather way. All we can do is to hope for a favourable wind and fair weather."

The weather was all that could be desired on the day of the departure into Sussex. Although a strong gale had swept over the South during the night, by mid-day its strength had become spent, and only an occasional gust scurried in its wake. Bright sunshine flooded the flying vista of fields beyond the windows of the compartment which the four travellers were sharing, and the young grass-lands glowed with a brilliant emerald hue.

Mrs. Winchester, who had often acted in an advisory capacity to Violet during the past twelve months, had learned precisely why the house-party had been formulated. She was secretly amused by the quaint nature of the arrangements. None of the other expected guests was known either to her husband or herself, and she was wondering what the general attitude was likely to be in the event of the guests eventually sharing her own knowledge as to the origin of the invitations. Not that she really believed Violet to have been inspired solely by the wish to be of assistance to Laura. She knew, in fact, that Violet looked forward to presiding at the party with secret pride and pleasure. But, in Freda's view, this merely added to the quaintness of the situation.

It was four o'clock when the travellers

reached Relstead—their destination. In the roadway beyond the rough, wooden paling that fenced off the tiny station two labourers, shouting directions to each other in a refreshing dialect, levered away at a fallen tree-trunk in the effort to raise it on to a cart that already supported a couple of lopped elms with jagged stumps. A ramshackle inn and a few red-tiled cottages completed the picture.

"How rustic!" exclaimed Freda, who had alighted first.

"Charming!" supplemented Winchester faintly. He was gazing at a very old man who was standing outside the barrier with a large whip in his hand. Behind the old gentleman, whose countenance competed with the tiles and was almost totally surrounded by white whiskers, stood a moth-eaten victoria with a grey horse between the shafts. A few native sight-seers were dotted in negligent postures along the paling, and at the barrier itself a small boy, seated on the top of a battered milk-churn, was quaffing tea from the lid of a billican.

"I anticipate," said Winchester, addressing Leonard, who had been superintending the unloading of the luggage, "that a strong Nature note will be a feature of your future compositions."

The poet had just made the discovery that, as the only other station conveyance was not at the moment available, the luggage would have to be left and brought on later. The tickets were therefore handed to the collector, who transferred from one hand to the other a slice of bread-and-butter, and the party arranged itself in the victoria.

"You can see 'South View' from the top of the hill," Violet said, as the victoria rocked on to the winding road. "It is a grey stone house on the sky-line overlooking the valley."

When the victoria reached the top of the hill, Freda almost immediately confirmed Violet's confident statement. A moment later the house was lost to view.

"I understood you to say," remarked Winchester, "that the water-supply came from a couple of cisterns on the roof?"

"Quite right," Leonard told him; "and each holds five hundred gallons."

"In that case," rejoined his friend, "one of them could hardly have been stolen; but the fact remains that I saw only one just now."

"They stand one behind the other

between the gables," explained Leonard. "You need have no fear that we shall be short of water."

The house did not again become visible until the victoria entered the drive, from which elevation nothing higher than the coping could be seen.

"Welcome to 'South View,'" said Violet, as the carriage drew up before the main entrance.

The poet alighted into a puddle of water and assisted his wife and Freda to avoid it. A middle-aged man-servant—it was Pratt, who had been sent down earlier in the week—descended the front steps. He stepped daintily from one to another, for they were dripping with water. Winchester, who was last in leaving the vehicle, noticed that every window in the front of the house was wide open. Over the whole building was an aura as of spring-cleaning.

"No one turned up yet, Pratt?" demanded his master.

"No one, sir. I hope, sir, you received the telegram safely?"

"What telegram?" inquired Violet.

"About what has happened, madam. I sent George to find a telegraph office and send a wire. He has not returned yet, and I am afraid that, being new to these parts, he has lost his way back. It was at ten o'clock this morning, madam; the remark had only just been passed how strong the wind was—as a matter of fact, it was George who passed the remark——"

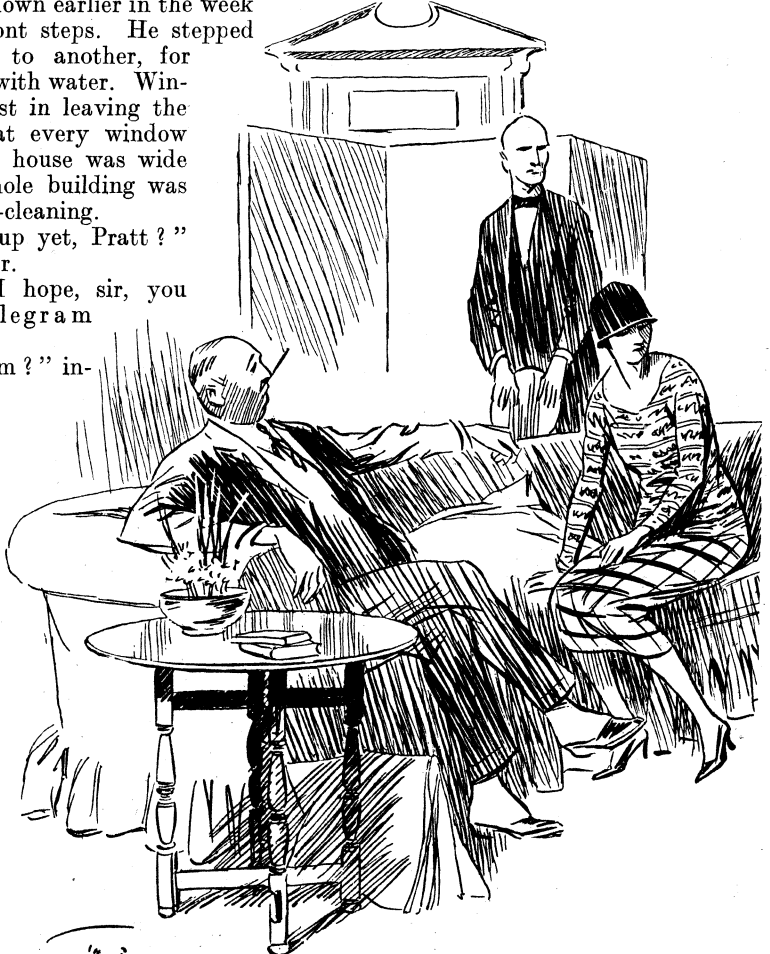
"To what are you referring?" interrupted Leonard curtly.

"To one of the tanks, sir. It came through the roof about an hour after breakfast."

In the emergency which followed, Freda showed herself to be most tactful and comforting, and Violet did not give way to tears until after the inspection of the first-

floor apartments. In the kitchen, which was comparatively free from dampness, the cook, a large-hearted woman who had engaged Violet as a mistress at first sight, wept in silent sympathy while preparing slices of bread for toasting.

Despite Pratt's warning that a ceiling still fell every half-hour or so, Leonard and Winchester had remained upstairs to view the damage. They were thinking of the outstanding members of the house-party and the problem of sleeping accommodation. It was a problem the inspection failed



"Brought by a boy on a bicycle, madam . . .  
a reply is paid for."

entirely to solve. The only rooms in the upper part of the house which had their ceilings in the usual place, and not on the beds, were the rooms at each wing beneath the gables, the sleeping quarters of the staff. The collapse of the wooden supports of the

cistern had precipitated their galvanised-iron burden on the leads with such force that a section of the roof had dropped into the house with the tank. A couple of maids, with mops and pails, were still hard at work in those parts of the house where the water had not yet found its level, and only the ground-floor apartments offered a refuge from the little torrents which occasionally descended from unexpected places.

fall," said Leonard. "Maurice thinks so, too."

"Quite so," rejoined his friend gravely.



"Violet read through the telegram three times."

A hasty conference took place in the kitchen.

"It's a mere waste of time to entertain the notion that order can be made of the chaos in the bedrooms before night-

"There would also be a risk of receiving a ceiling in the middle of the night."

"Therefore," concluded the poet, "accommodation must be arranged in the village."

"Or else," suggested Winchester thought-

fully, "a 'special' chartered to take them back to Town as soon as they arrive."

"Why not utilise the ground-floor rooms as bedrooms?" Freda asked. "That is, if the spare linen has escaped the flood. And even if it hasn't, we can telephone to the nearest town for a supply to be sent immediately."

"If the telephone has escaped the gale," murmured Winchester.

"That's the best suggestion of all," exclaimed Violet. "The ground-floor ceilings are hardly affected. But—oh, what a house-warming!"

Freda's suggestion brought Pratt into the consultation.

"I endeavoured to telephone this morning, madam, immediately after the accident," he said, "but the wires are down in the village. I will inquire about the linen."

To Violet's relief he returned with the assurance that the linen was undamaged.

Leonard was at once despatched to the station in the waiting victoria to meet the train then due, and to wait, if necessary, for the last train of the day, which was due in about six o'clock. He had instructions to explain the situation to the guests and to arrange a meal for them at the inn, of which they would partake before setting out for "South View." He left in a depressed state of mind.

"I hope they will all be reasonable," was Violet's despairing reflection. "This comes of cutting things so fine. Perhaps," she added hopefully, "they will be so glad to think that the cistern blew down when it did, and not after their arrival, that they will——"

"Of course they will," Freda assured her comfortingly; "that's exactly how I feel myself."

Violet was impelled to bestow upon her friend a grateful kiss.

"What a mercy it is that you and Maurice are on the spot!" she exclaimed.

An uneasy thought occurred to Winchester. He drifted away in search of Pratt, whom he found waiting to assist in the work of removal.

"I suppose," he inquired of the manservant, "that the other cistern is quite secure?"

"Absolutely, sir," replied Pratt without hesitation. "The same thought had occurred to me. It stands flush on the roof. The one that fell in was raised on supports. It's a

mercy, sir," Pratt confided in conclusion, "that George wasn't killed. We had to dry his clothes in front of the kitchen fire. He said he thought, sir, as someone had picked up the Niagara Falls and dropped 'em on him."

"I trust he wasn't injured?"

"Not a bit, sir. It just washed him downstairs a couple of flights and left him sitting in one of the bathrooms."

The interview was terminated by a summons from the kitchen.

"There is no time to lose, Maurice," Freda told her husband. "Will you organise all the help there is at once? Violet is going to sort out the linen, and I am going to see what is fit to use out of the various perishable items in some of the rooms."

"Be sure, dear," Violet put in anxiously, "to choose the rooms in which the ceilings have already fallen, won't you?"

Winchester accepted a cup of tea from the cook, and then superintended the shifting of the beds and dressing-tables from the upper rooms. During this operation the party received an acquisition of strength through the return of George, who had been misdirected several hours ago to a village called Halsham. By a judicious system of screens, two drawing-rooms and the library were eventually converted into twice that number of bedrooms, which, it was calculated, would accommodate the whole of the expected party, provided an economy of two rooms could be effected in the servants' quarters. For nearly two hours the work proceeded steadily, and just as the transposition was completed and the last bed re-made, the sound of wheels on the gravel of the drive became audible in the dusk outside, and a vehicle came to a standstill at the front door.

Leonard found his wife and the Winchesters in the breakfast-room, the only room on the ground-floor which had preserved its identity.

"Not a soul has turned up," he informed them. "The first train was empty, and one man only got out from the last. He had a large flower in his buttonhole and a bottle in his pocket. He asked the porter what time they closed. I mention these facts because they impressed themselves on me. For me this individual personified Relief. I was glad to see him. And now don't ask me what could have happened to our guests. The fact that they wired to say they were coming to-day—in fact, that they would be delighted to come to-day—

exonerates me from charges of having fixed the wrong day in the letters, or of having forgotten to post them. The probability is that they all missed the last train from Town after lunching heavily there in the determination of making sure of one good meal before throwing themselves on our mercy."

Into the midst of the general bewilderment intruded Pratt with a telegram on a tray.

"Brought by a boy on a bicycle, madam," he told Violet. "A reply is paid for."

Violet read through the telegram three times, and finally glanced up at Leonard with a puzzled frown.

"Who wrote the invitations?" she demanded.

"I dictated them to Pratt," replied Leonard. "I am prepared, moreover, to vouch for the fact that they were intelligible and legible."

Violet cast an appealing look at both Freda and Winchester. The latter, who was suddenly assailed by an unaccountable feeling of uneasiness, lit a cigarette.

"What paper was it you wrote the letters on, Pratt?"

"On some writing-paper, madam," answered Pratt.

"Of course. But what writing-paper?"

"As far as I remember, madam, there was some writing-paper on the desk when I sat down. I used that."

Violet made a gesture eloquent of despair. "Laura's," was all she said.

Leonard relieved her of the wire, which, he immediately observed, had been handed in that afternoon at a telegraph office in an Essex village.

"Am lodging your guests" (it read) "with neighbours wire instructions and explain use of my notepaper Laura."

The poet was silent for a moment; finally he handed the telegram to the Winchesters.

"I am afraid," he said simply, "that Laura will fail to understand that the fault is really hers. Had she not left her notepaper lying about, the mistake could not have been made. My sole desire all along has been to assist her. She will also fail to understand this, and there is nothing I can say, within the limits of a prepaid wire, that is likely to ease the situation. The moment seems a fitting one for another conference."

## CHILDREN OF THE HEATH.

**T**HE little young birch trees, they grow in the heath,  
Honey-scents round them above and beneath,  
Their delicate branchlets a-sway and astir  
In the breath of the furze and the breath of the fir,  
Till they climb to full height—oh, they think 'twill be soon!—  
Some wonderful night, at the wane o' the moon.

The little young brackens, they grow in the heath,  
Honey-bells round them above and beneath;  
They slowly uncurl, while their crosiers of green  
In sweet benediction uplifted are seen,  
Till they gain their full height—oh, they dream 'twill be soon!—  
Some mystery night, at the dark o' the moon.

My little young hopes, they spring in the heather,  
Where sun-dew and cotton-grass waver together;  
They timidly mount to the magical hour,  
The great golden moment when buds come to flower,  
When they reach their far height—oh, I pray 'twill be soon!—  
Some fairy-gift night, at the full o' the moon!

MAY BYRON.



# THE REWARD OF KWASIND

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

**K**WASIND, whose name in English means The Strong Man, lived with his daughter Suggemah, The Mosquito, in a conical teepee on the ironbound shores of Lac Seul, which lies roughly halfway between Lake Superior and Hudson Bay. Should you desire to know more of Lac Seul, it will suffice to say that the surrounding country is flat and rocky, the timber small and straggling, the fishing good, the fur better than good, the summers are hot and sweltering, the winters bleak and smitten with biting winds.

This is one of the many regions of the North once administered by the factors of the Company of Gentlemen Adventurers who became in time lords of the territory they penetrated, and developed into the undisputed rulers of the Land of Little Sticks, till later their sway was challenged by others; but Kwasind, being a conservative by nature, preferred to do business at the old shop. Also there was the fact that Mactavish, the near-by factor, was a man of few words, who had the habit of doing rather better than his promise. And that helped trade a great deal.

It fell, during a winter when the winds were unusually bitter, that there passed through the Lac Seul country the story that white men were looking through spy-glasses that stood on three legs to ascertain if there could be found a good trail for the thing that vomited fire, and ran on wheels, and carried many, many men in its entrails. Kwasind, like other Ojibways in the district, heard this story, and hoped greatly that there was nothing in it. For one thing, there were enough white men as matters stood. For another, any such arrangement would certainly affect the hunting and trapping. He understood a

little English, but had small respect for the men he learned it from, excepting always Mactavish. And, after all, it was his country, and not theirs.

He was thinking about this one day while going the round of his traps, which meant a circuit of about a hundred and thirty miles, and took about a week, when he noticed that a recent snowshoe trail cut across his old one, a trail that had certainly been made within the last few hours. Also he saw in a moment that it was a white man's trail, that the man was tired or sick, about six feet tall, limped a trifle on his left leg, was not sure where he was going, and carried a pack that was but loosely strapped to his shoulders.

There were a good many other points about the trail that one could not mistake—for instance, that the shoes had been made by old Keego, on Manitou Lake, that the man had one very sore heel, and some of the fingers of his left hand were frozen. These were of minor interest. The one that stood out was that the stranger needed help, and needed it badly.

He found the man in less than half a mile, found him in a tumbled heap, with his eyes shut, and grey patches on his cheeks; whereupon Kwasind got very busy, and in six minutes was holding a cup of steaming tea to the stiff lips. In sixteen minutes he was smashing down the trail to his nearest hunting shack, grunting words of encouragement over his doubly burdened shoulder to the figure that staggered behind him. Twenty-four hours later he lifted the flap of the teepee on Lac Seul and motioned the stranger in. The latter obeyed, swayed weakly for an instant, then pitched forward on his face.

Now, it is written—though few there be

that are wise enough to read before the punishment comes for disobedience—that the wilderness has rules of her own. To follow these without question is to be safe. To violate them is to invite the inevitable. Young Murchison, who in nature and mind could not be called a thoroughbred, and was late from the office of an engineering firm that did their business in the sober purloins of Victoria Street, S.W., had not read the rules, and thereby committed certain grievous errors. He left camp not very sure of where he was going, he started out tired and with a sore heel, in the first half-hour he lost the mitt from his left hand, and, lastly, did not trouble to watch the sun, of which there may be but little in such regions in winter, nor did he bother to adjust his pack, which, swinging loosely, added to his fatigue without his knowing it. Also a bit of shrapnel near his left knee had begun to burn like fire. So, taking one thing with another, the conclusions of Kwasind might be considered fairly accurate.

Twelve hours later the white man stretched his six-foot length of weary body—Kwasind had estimated his height by the length of his stride—and opened his eyes. His feet were swollen, and the patches on his cheeks very tender. He was lying beside a smokeless fire of dry wood, from which vagrant sparks danced upward to an opening where the teepee poles met and crossed. The camp was floored with balsam boughs, over which lay caribou robes and rabbit-skin blankets, the latter made of long one-inch-wide strips woven into a sort of loose fabric. On the other side of the fire sat Suggemah, her black hair in two long thick braids that trailed over her supple shoulders. She was very busy with something, and presently Murchison made out that she was mending a pair of moccasins. They looked like his own. He studied the smooth, impassive face, the high cheek-bones, the squareness of her small, strong wrists, the quick certainty of the slim, brown hands. Then he met a glance from her black eyes. It was queer, he thought, to be alone with a heathen girl like this. And where was the man?

"Hungry?" asked Suggemah. She had been practising her English for hours past, repeating it over in whispers to herself, and greatly intrigued with the whole situation.

"Very hungry," he replied, feeling that he could have gnawed contentedly at the blanket that covered him.

She made a soft little noise in her throat, and lifted the lid from a pot by the fire. Instantly the teepee was filled with the most seductive odours. There was a part-ridge in that pot, and a bit of bacon—which on Lac Seul was worth a dollar and a half that winter, or, say, the price of a fairly prime mink skin—and a lump of caribou meat, half a whitefish that Kwasind had lifted from beneath the ice a few hours previously, and some balls of flour, known in the North as doughboys, which provide what may be called the cementing agent to every really solid meal. All these had been simmering in a slow, deliberate fashion that permitted none of their virtues to escape, and now sent out an invitation that made Murchison lick his swollen lips and stretch an eager hand.

"Not much first time," said Suggemah, smiling gravely. "Eat more by and by. White man make much sick eat too much."

He ate slowly, which was an effort, watching her out of the corner of his eye. There was a good deal of the aristocrat about her. She didn't stare at him, or giggle, or do any of the things that some girls he knew would have done in the circumstances, nor was she in any way self-conscious. The teepee was clean and tidy, her clothes—which she had evidently made herself—were neat and well-finished, and there was that in her face and manner which said very plainly that she expected to be treated by this stranger with exactly the consideration she had for him. This was her party, and in her father's house.

Presently he put down an empty dish with an eloquent sigh. "That was very, very good. No more now?"

"Smoke!" said Suggemah, and handed him his own pipe. "My father come back soon. Me make your feet better now."

She rubbed them with an ointment of herbs and bear's grease that soothed the fire in his flesh, and there seemed to be healing in her very touch. He was smoking thoughtfully, wondering how to thank her, when from close by in the bush came a sudden squealing cry that sounded strangling and almost human. He looked at her, startled.

"Me snare wahboose-rabbit. Plenty wahboose this winter. Last winter not many. Every seven years great sickness kill them."

"Where is your father?"

"He go see traps. You go sleep now. He here when you wake up."

Murchison did as he was bid, it being very easy to obey. He dreamed as he slept, with visions of other Samaritans of whom he had read, especially of One, grave and tender, while into his dreams drifted the dull reports from the bleak expanse of Lac Seul where the ice expanded and heaved in the intense frost, and a lone timber wolf howled hungrily from the slope of a distant ridge. And all the time, hour after hour, Suggemah tended the fire, lest the stranger be

There were many questions she wanted to ask when he woke, but her English could not go that far. What did girls of her own age do and look like in the land he came from? Was the trapping good, and were there plenty of rabbits? What did one pay for a red flannel skirt at the trading posts? Was the snow deep in winter, and the birchbark good for canoe-making? And when a girl married, did she have to work very hard, and chop wood, and feed



"I say, what will you take for that pipe?"

cold, replenishing its blaze from the pile of wood at the teepee door.

the dogs, and pull the nets from under the ice? That was the job Suggemah liked

least, though she had never dreamed of saying so.

All these things would fall to her lot, and

long as she possibly could. But there was no escape from Fate.

Late that night Murchison heard the yelp



Kwasind regarded him calmly. That pipe had been smoked by his great-grandfather all the way from Lake Superior to the Coppermine River."

because she rather dreaded them she was staying with her grave, kindly father as

of dogs a mile away, and presently the creak of shoes outside the teepee, then the stamp

of feet, and Kwasind came in, a tall, white pillar of a man with frost rime sparkling on his upper lip. He glanced at his guest, nodded to Suggemah, and said not a word till he had eaten.

"Me go your camp tell everybody you all right come back to-morrow," he remarked presently. "Everybody think you dam fool get lost and die."

Murchison thought that this bordered on the personal. But he probably had been a fool of some description. So he merely tried to explain that he knew nothing of the North, which was quite unnecessary, and that he was one of a survey party exploring for a new railway.

Kwasind nodded. "Why you make railway here?"

"To open up the country and bring lots of people." The young man said this with a touch of pride, and saw himself waving the banner of progress.

The Indian made a deliberate gesture, fingers out, palm down.

"Plenty people here now. Me no want your fire-wagon. This my country. You keep fire-wagon at home your country. Great Spirit tell me last night fire-wagon no good for Land of Little Sticks. Frighten mink and otter and caribou. Big noise and much stink."

Murchison felt amused and rather patronising. Without doubt he was dealing with a very limited intelligence, and Kwasind did not mean to be rude, nor did he realise that he would make money more easily after the railway was built, and would benefit in many ways at present past the comprehension of a benighted heathen.

"That's all right," he said carelessly, "and you'll soon get used to it."

It was a social and tactical error. What Murchison had failed to perceive was that for the time being he was the guest of a member of one of the oldest aristocracies in the world, a man who was proud to a degree that only a very few understand, a man who had been weighing him with remarkable care. Kwasind was very wise in some ways, and very ignorant in others, but he knew this, and was therefore very far from being a fool. He understood the instincts of animals, and the ways of fur and feather, and could read the skies like an open book, and was brave and simple and honest, and could and did live well where a white man would starve. As to white men in general, his experience told him that his people were usually better off without them, excepting

always the Hudson Bay factors, who often married Indians, that union producing the best all-round specimen to be found in the woods—the Scotch half-breed.

And Kwasind did want the country for his tribe and himself. It wasn't much to ask, and the fur not as good as it used to be, and what he could not understand was why men should leave their own territory to invade his. As for a railway, he had the feeling that it would be the beginning of the end.

"Suppose me make fire-wagon pass close by your teepee, you no like him, eh?" he said after a long pause.

"I'd rather like it," chuckled Murchison, "and if I didn't I'd move the teepee. That's what you'll have to do, old man."

Kwasind said nothing, having made up his mind to that long ago, and presently his guest noted the beauty of the soapstone pipe around which the strong, brown fingers curved so contentedly.

"I say, what will you take for that pipe?"

Kwasind regarded him calmly. That pipe had been smoked by his great-grandfather all the way from Lake Superior to the Coppermine River. It was saturated with tradition and history, a thing beyond purchase, consecrated by the vanished lips that once closed over its stem, the companion of lonely hours when the winds were bitter, the solace for punishing days when one tightened the leather thong round one's empty stomach. Such things were not sold.

But the longer Murchison stared, the more he coveted. It was utterly unlike any pipe he had ever seen, with the wing-bone of a crane for a stem, and he ached to take it back to London, show it to admiring friends, and tell them of his adventure on Lac Seul while he filled it with British tobacco, not the filthy stuff that the present owner seemed to fancy.

"I'll give you five dollars."

Kwasind shook his head.

"Ten!"

Ten dollars was the price of seven prime mink skins on Lac Seul that winter, and a deal of money, but Kwasind did not give a sign.

"Fifteen!" said Murchison. "Better let me have it. You can make another any day."

Kwasind took the pipe from his mouth, looked at it fixedly, and held it out. There was an expression in his eyes that his guest only understood later on.

"Take it!"

Murchison's hand was in his pocket, when Kwasind added with a curious inflexion: "Keep it. I do not sell, but give."

It was very silent in the teepee that night, with not even a whine from the dogs half buried in the snow outside, and the white man, in a rabbit-skin sleeping-bag, lay on his back and thought for a long time. He rather felt he had put his foot in it. Kwasind had not said another word, nor had Suggemah, on the subject of the pipe, so the only thing to do was to settle up next morning in so liberal a fashion as to wipe out any sense of loss the gift might have occasioned. If he gave the old fellow twenty-five dollars for saving his life, that ought to put everything straight. And Suggemah could get no end of an outfit with twenty-five dollars.

At noon on the following day he stood on the summit of a ridge, and Kwasind pointed to a pencil of grey smoke that rose from a clump of dark green spruce far below. They had come to it as a bird flies across country, and on the way Kwasind indicated the run of the water, the slope of the hills, the boundaries of lakes, and numberless other things of infinite value to an engineer. It gave him no pleasure to do this, but it was his duty as a host, even though it made the advent of the fire-wagon all the more certain. Then, with the stranger's camp in sight, and the stranger himself safe and restored, he said a grave good-bye.

Murchison put out his hand. "Here's twenty-five dollars, and thank you."

Kwasind drew himself up to his full height and waved aside the money. His dark, smooth face was stern, and he gave a smile that the young man thought was almost contemptuous.

"No take money for help sick man. Some day, perhaps, you do same for me."

In the next moment he was alone. His host had vanished like a spirit over the crown of the ridge, and there was left only his fresh trail, with the snow crumbling in over the edges, and the dull sound of an axe, softened as it rose from the adjoining valley.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some two years later there stood on the stage of a London hall a group of Indians with painted faces and variegated garments of gaudy colours. Their narrow, black, unwinking eyes took in the serried rows of the audience, the staring lights, and the great dome of the building that housed them. To their ears came the murmur of

a multitude, and they caught a strange odour that rose from packed humanity. They did not know what to think, for this, and all that had preceded it, was too far removed from anything they had known before. But they were aware that they were there to be stared at. At home they did not paint their faces, nor attire themselves in scarlet and yellow and emerald green. That was left for the young squaws, who, naturally, were fools. But the interpreter had explained that the white people expected it, and it was all covered in the contract which the Indian agent had read over very carefully before he allowed Kwasind to make his cross at the bottom. The money had been paid in advance, and waited his return to Lac Seul with Suggemah.

All this was arranged after a white man had made in the North the picture which had been shown them the day they reached London. It was very great magic. Kwasind was in it, and Suggemah, and even old Keego, for whom a messenger had been sent to Manitou Lake, because he had a face like an owl with his beak chopped off. They had all fished and hunted, and done the things they did, anyway, while the white man said strange words through the interpreter, and twisted at a thing on three legs that had a large glass eye and made a noise like a woodpecker against a hollow log. They had journeyed in the entrails of the fire-wagon, in fire-canoes that had many bowels, one on top of the other, they had crossed a great lake of bitter water, where all the islands had been washed away, and an evil spirit turned their stomachs upside down within them, and the chief of the fire-canoe worshipped the sun every day at noon, raising his arms to heaven in the middle of his prayer. And now, at the end of it all, there were white people like the leaves in summer, and a great noise and many strange smells.

Kwasind and Suggemah were sick of the whole thing. They didn't mind being stared at, but they hated to sleep in small rooms in a large place where there was no air. One could not trap or hunt here, and when one night Kwasind stole out by himself and snared a rabbit in a little clearing where there were trees, and many people rowed themselves in boats in the daytime, there was much trouble, and many words by men who wore blue clothes. He had snared a duck, too, while it slept, and had it under his clothes all the time, but felt it was wiser

to say nothing about it. As to Suggemah, she was tired, and bewildered at things she did not understand, and a little jealous because she could never look like the women she saw. So between the two there was a deep longing for the expanse of Lac Seul, and to meet someone who knew their own country, and would talk to them, even if not in their own tongue, about the simple

see Murchison, but that possibility was put aside. Now the extraordinary thing had actually happened. He whispered it to Suggemah, and she, too, stared hard. Then she nodded.

"It is the same man," she said under her breath.

"There is much that I would say to him," murmured her father, "and he has a debt to pay. No doubt he will take me for a while out of this place to where there is



"'Boozhoo!' he said huskily. Boozhoo. You remember Lac Seul?"

things they knew and missed and loved so greatly.

One night, when this hunger lay heavy on the heart of Kwasind, and he was more than usually sick of his green blanket and the paint on his cheeks, he happened to pick out amongst the blur of the audience one face that he actually knew. It was that of the man whose life he had saved. He had wondered for a while if he would

wood and water, and the wind blows, and I can snare something. I would speak to him now in the sign language, but he would not understand. What shall I do?" He paused, feeling very helpless. "There is not any trouble in finding a man in the woods, but here is one that I see, yet cannot reach."

Suggemah thought quickly. "Without doubt he will go away by the big door wherein he came, so if we were there first it would be easy. When the magic has nearly moved across the wall, tell the interpreter that your stomach is sick within you, and go to the big door and wait. When he comes out, tell the young man what is in your heart, and without doubt he will be very glad."

Kwasind nodded, and did as was arranged. So it happened that for a quarter-hour he stood like a graven image at the big door, with the flaring lights of a London street full on his painted face. His arms were folded, and not a muscle of him stirred. His dark eyes, lustrous and steady, betrayed nothing, but his heart was full of a great

hunger. In all these millions there was not one he knew amongst the white men, saving only the man he waited for. He saw again the half-frozen figure beside the unsteady trail, remembered Murchison's gratitude when he said good-bye, felt again the smooth surface of the soapstone pipe he had prized so greatly and given so quietly, and reckoned that now, at any rate, the white man would find some suitable way of saying "Thank you!" in his own fashion. Moments passed. People glanced at him, remarked smilingly that it was good advertising, and passed on. Then came the sound of many feet.

Kwasind's eye flashed and his body stiffened. The avalanche surged by, growing in volume, and he surveyed it with a gaze keener by far than any he met. Girls stared at him, nudged each other, and giggled. Men regarded him, closer now than before, and nodded understandingly. He saw all of them—and none. Suddenly he stepped forward, put out an arm like an iron bar, and touched someone on the shoulder.

"Boozhoo!" he said huskily. "Boozhoo! You remember Lac Seul?"

Murchison pulled up, peered hard into the strong face, noble in spite of its fantastic colouring, and gave a quick laugh of delighted recognition.

"By all the Powers! Were you on that platform?"

"Yes," said Kwasind. "Me there, and see you."

Murchison blinked, shouldered his way to the edge of the crowd, and looked at this friend who had suddenly appeared, an older and wiser Murchison, with a good many of his corners knocked off by work and experience. In the past two years he had thought a good deal about Lac Seul, and now saw himself in a not very favourable light so far as that incident was concerned. But one couldn't undo it. Queer how at this moment the sight of Kwasind should revive the chill of frost in his body, and make him feel again the numbing approach of that stupor from which no man awakes in the North. He was aware of this now, and a good deal more.

"Suggemah," he asked, "is she here, too?"

The father of Suggemah nodded.

"Good! Where do you live?"

Kwasind made a gesture that embraced North London.

"Will you and Suggemah come and see me now? I want to talk about Lac Seul."

Kwasind's heart leapt, but not a muscle of his face moved.

"You wait. Me get her."

What happened in the next hour always remained in the mind of the hunter as the sort of thing one liked to remember. He and Suggemah embarked in one of the smaller white devil-wagons that ran about the streets, and came to a big teepee in a row of teepees all made of stone. There the white man brought them to a room wherein sat an old woman of his own tribe, and told her that these were the friends from Lac Seul of whom he had often spoken. Thereupon the woman kissed Suggemah on both cheeks, and held Kwasind's hands for some time, making a queer noise like a laugh, but with tears on her cheeks—which surely was a strange thing. After that was much feasting on many kinds of food brought by another white woman, who screamed as though in fear the first time she entered the room. Then talk of Lac Seul, and much smoke. In the middle of the smoke the young man slapped his leg as though bitten by many mosquitoes at once, and, going away, came back, smiling, with the soapstone puagun, or pipe, at the sight of which, as Kwasind put it, his stomach rolled over and he desired it greatly. Five—ten—fifteen—twenty-five dollars—he was a man of substance, and could afford to buy it now. The longer he looked, the greater became his desire. But it had been his gift, so he said not a word.

For a moment Murchison did not say anything either, but stood with the ancient thing in his fingers, glancing oddly from the hunter to his mother. Very deliberately he filled it and struck a match. Kwasind quivered ever so slightly, his beady eyes fixed on the treasure of his tribe.

"Was this a peace pipe?" asked Murchison.

"Sometimes a peace pipe. It has seen both peace and war."

"But it was never a pipe of reproach?"

Kwasind's dark brows wrinkled a little.

"I do not know that word."

Murchison reddened, glanced at his mother, then took one puff, and held out the puagun to its rightful owner.

"I believe that," he said, "but I do. Here you are, old chap!"



# THE MAKING OF JOHNSON

By PHILIP G. CHADWICK

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

JOHNSON was a made man.  
He was sixteen.

Over a year before, an orphan, with nothing to take to but sponging on others, and the casual labour market ready, like a swamp, to engulf his young life, he had mouched into the cold welcomes of Bilton & Co., and, obeying a curt clerk, had hidden his patched trousers in a great leathery chair.

Thence he had passed to an even greater and more leathery chair to stare intelligently at a long thin gentleman who wanted an office-boy. Ten minutes later, modern secondary education vindicated, he licked his first business stamp and felt like a lord.

And now that same chair had held him again and, as though it were upholstered in magic, had carried him once more into fairer lands. He was a made man. He was a clerk—determined to be curt.

Having hung the advertisement in the window and sealed the letter to the Labour Exchange, he grinned—as men grin—and prepared to snub the first would-be office-boy who should appear.

The natural celebration for such promotion was to take a girl to the pictures. A girl? *The* girl. Rosie Hebblethwaite, whom he had known a month and loved for two months.

It was the first time he had taken *her* to the pictures, because, such is the courtly instinct of the young dream, he had realised from the beginning that this would be a one-and-threepenny splash, not a mere fivepenny queuing with a kid. There must also be chocolates. No girl had ever had pictures and chocolates together from Johnson. As a man of ambition he had controlled his generosity and his pride, but as a success he unleashed both and loved

the girl he loved without financial fears to worry him.

Most nights, however, it was walks, intermittent ramblings in the Everyman's Land of love, but often on warmer nights the Heath claimed them, and there the earthly starlight of the distant city told them of its greatness, and its evil, and of the rewards awaiting those who could conquer it, and Johnson would translate these lordly tales to Rosie, bright-eyed and entranced at his side. She watched his steady young gaze, his firm lips, fondled the soft fingers of his competent, boyish hand, knowing he was not boasting nor dreaming, but just drawing *The City* as it was—and as it might be.

"It's the chance a man wants," said Johnson, "and the girl to keep him going. I've got the chance, and I've got—Rosie."

She was to share it with him.

A solemn little couple.

## II.

JOHNSON was a rising man.

He was twenty-one.

As confidential clerk and, later, secretary to Mr. Bilton, he had frequently to deal with matters such as few of his age encounter except in hearsay—investments, loans, other intricate transactions involving at times suave and ungaugable men such as bankers and foreign agents. Yet Johnson was never nervous with these dealings or people. An astute observer by nature, he cemented his gleanings with books and much thinking, so that when by chance he had to act on his own, he always acted rightly, never went too far, learned a little more.

On the day that he added "confidential" to "clerk" he celebrated the occasion by becoming engaged.



" 'It's the chance a man wants,' said Johnson, 'and the girl to keep 'im straight. I've got the chance, and I've got —' 'Dear ole Billy!' she gulped."

It wasn't Rosie Hebblethwaite; it was Maud Robinson.

There had been a lovers' quarrel, and before it could end in the way all lovers quarrels were intended to end, Rosie was gone. Johnson gazed at a small, empty house periodically until it took to itself new curtains and a harsh woman with twins. But years later he invariably glanced at the house if he happened to pass.

Time brought Maud Robinson and time brought their engagement. He had learnt to laugh at calf-love, if not quite sincerely, so Maud, coming, was taken for granted. A fellow must have a girl even though he

secreted an ideal. And she was pretty—even to the eyes of twenty-one—and charmed to an extent which interfered with business.

He thought it out altogether coldly between one fascinating meeting and another, when reality returned. This sort of thing had its proper place, but the business man's cue was to marry young and devote the rest

of his life to the greater romance of The City.

Maud did not care for sitting on the Heath, but sometimes, when there were no dance and no theatre, Johnson would Tube out to the old spot and revive youthful idealism, and smile at youthful idealism. Once or twice he told lies to achieve this end. "Working at the office. Our Australian agent here." Would that excuse, though changing its purpose, continue through life? Cynical thought! Such thoughts were odd in a newly-engaged young man, but, as success came, it seemed, cynicism dogged it, like a growth of dusty ivy on the column of ambition. That was The City.

The sensible thing was to get married.

He was in no hurry for marriage

### III.

JOHNSON was an ambitious financier.

He was thirty.

Only those who had known him for some years would have guessed him to be so young. His strong lips were thinner, his eyes wrinkled more than a little when he narrowed them in thought or gazed penetratingly at some client. There was a sallowness in his cheeks and a quite unyouthful force about his whole appearance.

As partner in the firm of Bilton and Co., he was only junior in name. The tall thin gentleman who had once interviewed the intelligent boy in the patched trousers was now little more than a signatory authority to that same boy. He had helped the boy and helped the youth, and now the man was helping him, spreading the name of Bilton throughout the world, justifying the old man in his new country residence and his growing preoccupation with landscape gardening and other mild post-City pursuits.

In a few months Johnson was to be married to a lady who would bring him much extra wealth and social prestige. Yes, Maud Robinson was long forgotten. There had been two sides to their problem; if too much gaiety interfered with business, too much business interfered with gaiety. He did not regret her. As for the Heath—it seemed a great pity that so much good land should be wasted.

Margaret Pendleton was charming in more than position and wealth. She would make an admirable hostess when he was elected M.P. and a coming leader in the new Business-for-Business Party, and though her upkeep might be costly, she was quite

worth all the diamonds she could wear—if not a heart.

He glanced up from his massive desk as old Mr. Bilton entered smiling.

"Hullo!" he said, with a grim parody of cheeriness. "You shouldn't have come up on a bad day like this. Oh, yes; everything going splendidly."

He never explained things to Bilton; he put considerate blinkers on him.

Business would flourish better if old Bilton retired.

### IV.

JOHNSON—was JOHNSON.

He was forty-two. The money lord.

A year after they were married his wife had deserted him. She wanted love, and love was not for him, either to give or to receive. He laughed reminiscently at the far-off, broken promise of his early youth, and thenceforward devoted himself to work, and, as once he had put penny to penny in a little tin post-office, now he built his fortune in thousands and hundreds of thousands, and his money-box was the world.

Grey-haired, worn and lined, he would have passed as an old man had The City not known him to be its youngest self-made millionaire; and every day he was to be found seated in his office, planning with a kind of mechanical intuition new speculations and enterprises.

Johnson! A name to play with, a man who knew not play.

Parliament had long palled on him; its hidden strings were tied to other and more deeply hidden strings, and so he had passed from public life and become a symbol to all but the few.

He pressed his desk bell. "Stenographer!" he said curtly to the flurried clerk. He had never lost his curtness.

He recollected that his old private typist had left, and that this would be a new one. Something fluffy and dreadful. Glaring at his papers, he waited until she was seated, and then began snapping out letters, his most private letters concerning intricate schemes whereby his tentacles would spread further. He was unafraid of publicity, and, anyway, girls never understood.

Suddenly he heard her pen cease movement, and he glanced up angrily. "Well?"

She was not fluffy in the least and very far from dreadful. She was neat, not young, competent-looking.

"But—Mr Johnson," said the girl, staring at her notes, then meeting his hard

gaze with fearless eyes, "this—this will ruin thousands of people!"

This girl did understand.

"It won't ruin me," said Johnson, making the first light-hearted remark that had passed his thin lips for years. He was staring at her curiously, almost in amazement.

"Heavens!" he said. "Rosie Hebblethwaite!"

She laughed and then looked like crying, and finally spoke. "How did you know? So many years!" Scarcely speaking. Just three or four word ejaculations.

"That little mole on your neck," he answered, pointing. "Your nose and eyes—yes, your eyes. And you're still wearing your mother's ring."

It was remarkable how memory returned. "You must be thirty-nine—forty—over," he said.

Not merely years fell from him, but millions of pounds and other accumulations. He felt suddenly like a colt, or a sandboy, or anything very alive, and for the one time in his life he was ashamed, bitterly ashamed.

"Where did you go?" he asked, and she told him her simple story, but he interrupted her before the end with an odd question.

"Are you the *same* Rosie? You know what I mean? I'm not the same Johnson."

A pause of mutual interest, realisation, hope. . . .

The fool of a financier blushed. "Wasn't," he corrected. "I am now."

He, too, sketched his life.

From a side-door there entered a lean, little man, entered to stand, staring.

"Ah, Clifton!" said Johnson. "About that Brazilian deal of ours—I've changed my mind. We won't sell."

"Won't sell!" Clifton learnt the meaning of surprise. "We've millions in it."

"We'll lose them," said Johnson blandly. "Then we'll sell the business—all the businesses. I'm tired."

Clifton snarled with an unsteady lip. "You mean mad!"

Momentarily the harsh lines returned to Johnson's face; for the last time he was curt.

"See here, Clifton," he rasped, rising to tower over the other man, "I'm boss here. You'll have your fat share, don't fear. But this house is selling out—and I'm retiring."

"In fact, I'm getting married," he said calmly to the enlargement of the late Mr. Bilton.

He shut the door and Mr. Clifton with it, leaving just two—the right two, two happy fools.

\* \* \* \* \*

They turned from the earthly starlight of London to the eternal starlight of Heaven. He held her close, and they stumbled down the rough path and over the Heath.

"You didn't ought to have made yourself forget—me," whispered Rosie.

"I 'ad to," said Johnson solemnly. "Jest to show what love means, and what can happen to a fellow if he loses it. It's The City. And, besides, it wouldn't have been a story if I hadn't done, it would have been true, kid. 'Cos I never *will* forget you."

Lamps showed in the road below, and the wind whispered above.

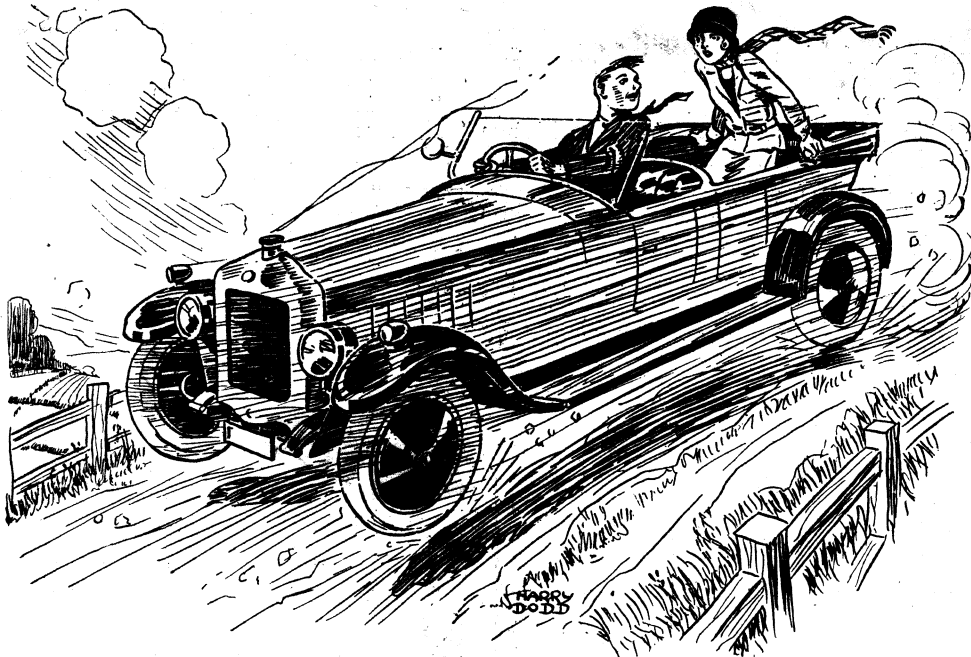
"It's the chance a man wants," said Johnson, "and the girl to keep 'im straight. I've got the chance, and I've got——"

"Dear ole Billy!" she gulped, and kissed him again.

She was fifteen, and he was sixteen.

And he was a made man.





BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

"If you look in the tool chest, dear, you will find my 'Hints to Drivers.' Will you read out paragraph six on page fourteen about loose steering-wheels?"

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### THE HAUNTED COTTAGE

*By Edward F. Spence.*

"It seems doubtful," said Lou-Lou to me, "whether we shall inherit Cousin Matilda's money." In speaking, she wrinkled the smooth white brow which William, her husband, has bullied her into displaying, though he loves her crown of filmy golden hair.

"And why?" I asked.

"You see," she answered, "my cousin came to stay with us at the Norfolk place we took for the Long Vac. William didn't want her, but she asked herself and came without waiting for an answer. We had only one other guest at the time—the Wilkins girl."

"Why, I thought—you thought—that William thought that she—"

"Of course, my dear. And when a man has that sort of thought, give him an overdose of the girl—that's my policy. In the sweetstuff shops they give all new assistants the run of their teeth till they hate the sight of a lollipop. Dear Matilda was a bit of a trial, for her latest 'ism' is spiritualism, which annoys William, and she talked tosh the first evening of her visit till past midnight."

"Poor William!" I murmured.

"And the Wilkins girl swallowed the stuff,

which riled him." Lou-Lou's big baby-blue eyes twinkled at the thought. "Next morning Matilda was all agog—whatever that may mean. My maid had been telling her the local gossip about a ghost in the village a mile off. Three years ago a man had murdered his wife and then hanged himself, and the cottage where he did it was said to be haunted. Matilda said: 'It is a splendid case for spiritual investigation.'"

"But what," I interrupted, "had it to do with spiritualism?"

"Oh, Matilda always mixes her 'isms.' We arranged to take her to the place, and William was to show the road, as it was on his way to a broad where there was a boat he wanted to see. Matilda in country costume is simply ripping. Mountaineering boots, a shortish fierce tartan skirt, a violent red jumper, and her huge bony face with a golf cap crowning her grey hair, make a grand picture."

"And the Wilkins girl?"

"She was a bit better. Still, she wore patent-leather shoes with high heels, and that settled William. When we reached the outskirts of the village—some such name as Odsham, I think—there was a villainous-looking old man with bleary eyes and a red nose. Looked like a poacher on the dole. Poachers do dole, don't they?"



THE FINISHING TOUCH.

"Oh, Betty, you are beautiful, but you are not clever!"  
"Anyone can be *clever*, but it takes brains to be *beautiful*."

"I suppose so," was my reply. "I'll ask my husband."

"Matilda asked the man the way to the haunted cottage, and he offered to come with us. I hardly understood what he said, but Matilda, who used to have a fad for dialects, was delighted, and declared that there was a thrilling strain of Danish in his speech. We soon came to a detached cottage with weed-grown front garden and broken windows, a dreary, woesbegone-looking place. The old man got a shilling out of William to enable him to borrow the key from the public-house a few doors further off, and was away a long time, while we stood in the nasty garden."

"I expect he had the key all the time."

"Probably. When he returned and opened

him approach her slowly, step by step, with blazing eyes, and she covers her face with her hands. I see the knife raised and hear the woman scream.' And Matilda gave a real blood-curdler, which was followed by a scream from the Wilkins girl, who then rushed out of the room and the house."

"And out of the story?"

"Yes, out of the story. She left us next day. Matilda went on most impressively with an account of the affair, full of 'I see' and 'I hear,' and really seemed speaking in a trance. Most impressive it was, thanks partly to that huge, bony kind of prophetic face. The poacher man was quite scared, and kept mopping his head with a red handkerchief; his legs were trembling. At last, when Matilda was giving



THE EXPLANATION.

MASTER: This soup is very salt, Clara.

MAID: An' I'm not surprised, neither, sir. Cook's young man has jilted 'er, and she's bin' cryin' all over the place!

the door, there was a common-looking, bare sitting-room and kitchen, and a horrid smell. We tramped upstairs—creaky stairs—and came to a big bedroom. Here the poacher man struck an attitude and began to tell the story of the crime in just the manner of a guide. He hadn't gone far when Matilda gave a screech."

"A screech?"

"Yes—quite thrilling. The Wilkins girl went pale. With an imperious gesture Matilda silenced the poacher. 'I see it all,' she said, 'distinctly,' but she spoke with closed eyes. 'I see the man standing, his hand behind his back, with the knife in it, and the woman, pale with terror, crouching in the corner. I see

an account of the man hanging attached to the gas bracket, William suddenly said sharply, 'Enough of this!' and, grabbing her hand, pulled her almost roughly out of the room, down the stairs, and through the garden. The poacher man jostled me in his hurry to get out. Matilda opened her eyes. 'Oh, where am I? What an awful vision! The place ought to be burned; their spirits cannot get out.'

"She was interrupted by the poacher man, who said that the lady had so upset him he felt faint, and would like some brandy, but had no money. William gave him something, and he shuffled off to the public-house."

"'Now,' said Matilda triumphantly to

William, 'how can you disbelieve that the spirits of the dead may still cling to earth? What I described I saw as distinctly as I see you.'"

"It did seem rather queer," I observed.

Lou-Lou laughed merrily. "At this moment Matilda was interrupted by someone saying 'Good morning!' We all turned, and William

doctor who works by rule of thumb and experience, and has to read the latest books in order to use the right phrases at an inquest.'

"Well, doctor," Matilda continued, 'we have just had most convincing proof of the attachment of spirits to the places whence they were violently torn away from their temporary bodily habitation.'



WILL IT COME TO THIS?

introduced us to his landlord, Doctor Romble, an old boy in a rather festive suit of dittos, with a reddish face and merry eyes.

"Oh, doctor," said Matilda, 'we've just had a most thrilling experience, and you, as a man of science—'

"A man of science, dear lady?' he interrupted. 'Don't be too hard on a country

"I wish,' said the doctor, 'I could use such lovely language; it would almost cure some of my patients.'

"Speaking crudely,' interposed William, 'we've just been to the haunted cottage.'

"The haunted cottage! What haunted cottage?' exclaimed Dr. Romble.

"Where the murder and suicide were



committed three years ago,' replied Matilda, anxious to get hold of the conversation again.

"You don't seem to have said much, Lou-Lou," I observed.

"Oh, I felt I wasn't on in that act. Whilst speaking, we were walking along through the village towards the public-house.

"I'm puzzled about the cottage,' remarked the doctor. 'You haven't reached it yet.'

"Not reached it yet?' we said in chorus, for the Wilkins girl had returned from somewhere.

"No, it's still two cottages further.' And, while speaking, he stepped forward briskly and called out: 'Mrs. Hudgson!' A plump, pleasant-looking woman came to the gate of a cottage—a pretty cottage with a jolly little

show you the other cottage?' asked Mrs. Hudgson. William nodded. 'I'll dust his jacket for him when I gets the chance, deceiving people like that!'

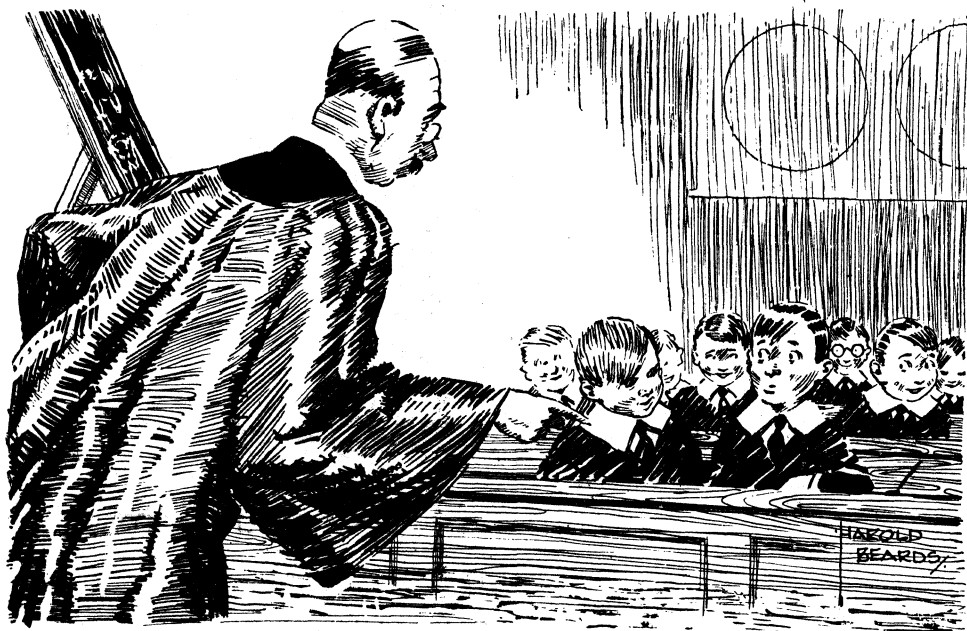
"We didn't go into Rose Cottage," continued Lou-Lou, "but walked back home, as Matilda felt rather faint. And William behaved like an angel, and never pulled the poor creature's leg, but she left us after lunch."

"But," I asked, "what grievance has she against you? It wasn't your fault."

Lou-Lou sighed. "My sweet Grace, she says she believes that I knew it was the wrong cottage all the time."

"And did you?"

Lou-Lou put one of her tiny well-manicured fingers to her dainty Cupid's bow mouth and



THE EXACT NUMBER.

MASTER: Now, Jones Minor, name six animals that live in Polar regions.

JONES MINOR: A seal—and five Polar bears.

garden. 'Will you show these friends of mine the room where Jim Barnes stuck his wife and hung himself?' And, turning, he said to William: 'She'll expect a bit of money—she keeps the room empty as a show place.'

"It wasn't here," said Matilda haughtily; 'it was that cottage, the empty, haunted cottage down there.'

"Oh, dear, no!" answered the medicine man. 'It was in this cottage—Rose Cottage—before Mrs. Hudgson took it. I know. I was called in professionally a few minutes after the affair, and cut the man down from the beam, and spent a long time on the spot, trying to revive him.'

"Did a nasty-looking man with a red nose

half closed one of the baby-blue eyes. Then she said in a whisper: "Mum's the word—and a jolly 'word' too, when you can get it. I'd been to Rose Cottage with my man two days before Matilda came, but I dursn't tell William."



"Yes, John," began Mrs. Jones, "as I was saying, Miss Blank has no manners. Why, while I was talking to her this morning she yawned eleven times."

"Perhaps, my dear, she wasn't yawning; she might have wanted to say something," replied her husband.



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THE LEAGUE.

By Grace Mary Golden.

"MIRIAM," I said, "this thing has gone too far. It must stop, and at once, or our domestic happiness will lay in ruins at our feet."

"Lie," darling, not 'lay,'" said Miriam. "That's hens. You told me so yesterday. And don't talk like the pictures. Anyone would think I'd taken to drink or drugs, or carrying on with the milkman, or something."

"You have," I said. "We'll call it 'something,' if you like, but it's worse than either drink or drugs, anyway. You can't deny that the meals are late—if meals there are—that I've scarcely a button to my back, that my socks are mostly hole, that you never touch the piano, that you mutter in your sleep——"

of strength to the weaker vessel, even if it did mean mixing my metaphors pretty badly.

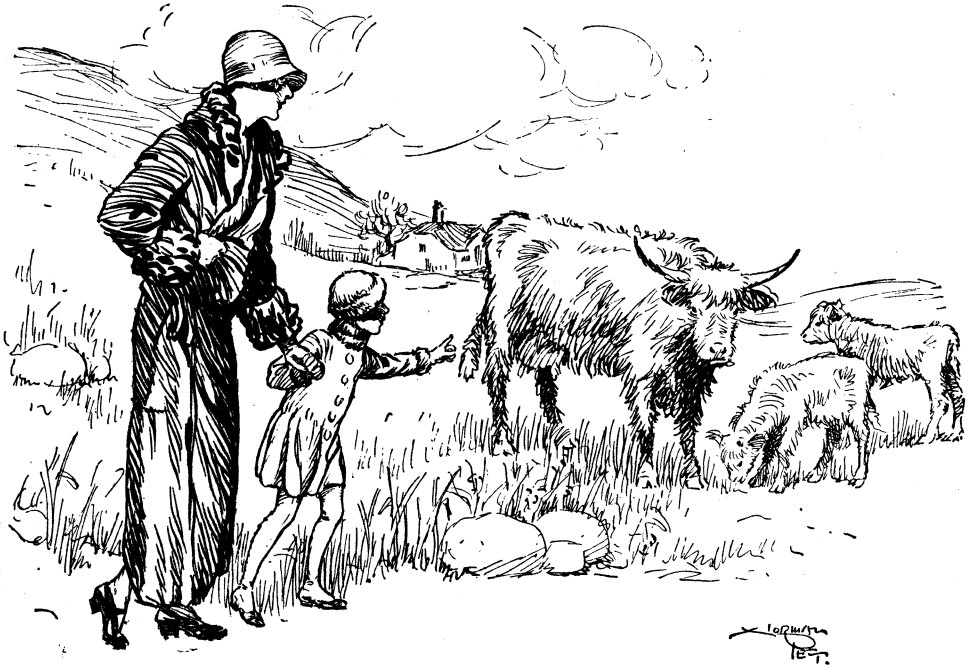
I took a long breath, lowered the diaphragm, and threw back my shoulders.

"All right," I said nobly. "We'll form a league."

"Oo!" said Miriam breathlessly. "And have a badge! And get people to join! How lovely!"

That did it. She spent the evening choosing the ribbon and making the badges, and then went in to the Smiths next door and persuaded them to join, which was easy, as they hadn't yet come under the spell of the foul fiend.

I wore my badge next day—Miriam having made me swear a solemn oath not to take it off at the end of the road—and it created quite a



THE LONG-HAIRED KIND.

BETTY (seeing Highland cattle for the first time): Oh, look, mummie—a Persian cow and kittens!

"That's better than snoring," Miriam interrupted irrelevantly, but I stuck to my point.

"It comes to this," I told her, "the tuing has become an obsession with you——"

"Talk about pots and kettles!"

"—and I want your promise to give it up now, this very day, altogether and absolutely."

"But, my dear old thing, that would be silly. Supposing I had the flu—think how it would pass the time! Why, I should hardly know I'd got it."

"Don't be morbid," I said severely. "You may not have the flu again for years and years."

"I may have it next week. But I'll tell you what—I will if you will!"

I blanched. She saw me blanch, and I saw her see me.

"It's different for me," I began. But I knew it was no use. I had got to be a tower

sensation at the office, being a nice tomato red. Jefferson said sadly that it would be no good to him—nothing could keep him off it now. Brownlow was rather impressed, and thought he'd tell his wife about it. Taylor laughed contemptuously and said he'd be sorry for himself if he couldn't control his inclinations without signing the pledge, and that all that was needed was to keep within bounds.

But even as he spoke a change came over him, and he began to mutter, his eyes looking through me unseeingly with that fixed, glassy stare . . .

I took him by the arm. I pleaded with him.

"Old man," I said, "let me beg of you! Give it up before it is too late! Once I was like you——"

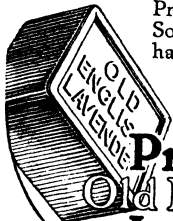
But he shook me off. I might as well have talked to the wind.



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That day at lunch I read the leader for the first time for weeks, and felt myself a hero.

But alas! my triumph was short-lived. I believed myself so strong that I forgot to be on my guard, and on the way home there was a man in the corner of the carriage . . . Oh, well!

Miriam met me with a defiant glitter in her eye.

"Where's your badge?" I asked instantly.

"It's no use," she burst out. "You'll have to be your old league yourself. Alice rang up this morning and asked if I'd done the one in this week's 'Homespun,' and who Epaminondas was, and of course I had to help her. I don't care. I— *Where's yours?*"

"Miriam," I said, "I cannot tell a lie. A

RESTAURANT PROPRIETOR (to orchestra conductor): I wish you'd display a little more tact in choosing the music. We've got the Worshipful Company of Umbrella Makers dining here this evening, and you've just played "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More!"



"THEY'RE beautiful," said he, admiring the flowers. "Do you know, they remind me of you."

"But they are artificial," she objected.

"Ah, yes," he replied, "but one would never know it."



## THE ALTERNATIVE.

LANDLADY: Now, Mr. Smudger, you'll have to pay your bill or leave.

ARTIST: Oh, thanks, awfully; my last landlady made me do both.

man left this in the train half done. He was evidently a beginner, for he'd left out ire and ore and Asa, King of Judah, and everything."

Miriam flung her arms round my neck.

"That's all right, then," she cried relievedly.

"Now we can do this one together!"

So we still have our meals with the table littered up with an English dictionary, a French dictionary, a Latin dictionary, a Greek lexicon, an atlas, a concordance, a dictionary of synonyms, a rhyming dictionary, a Shakespeare, the stores list, and an encyclopædia.

But I still think it was a good idea.



PROFESSOR RANKINE thinks that we shall soon be able to make films talk. And then, of course, we shall call them the "talkies."

*Facing Third Cover.]*

**FAME.**

LADY CRUSHER'S reception was crowded to suffocation, for the word had gone forth that she was exhibiting a new lion that evening.

Several cast-off lions, including artists from Chelsea, complete with whiskers, long-haired musicians, and actors with blue chins, hung about gloomily on the outskirts of the crowd. The rest of the throng surged wildly round a harmless-looking individual standing beside the triumphant Lady Crusher in the middle of the room. They shoved one another about, and even jumped up on silk-covered chairs to obtain a better view of the hero of the evening.

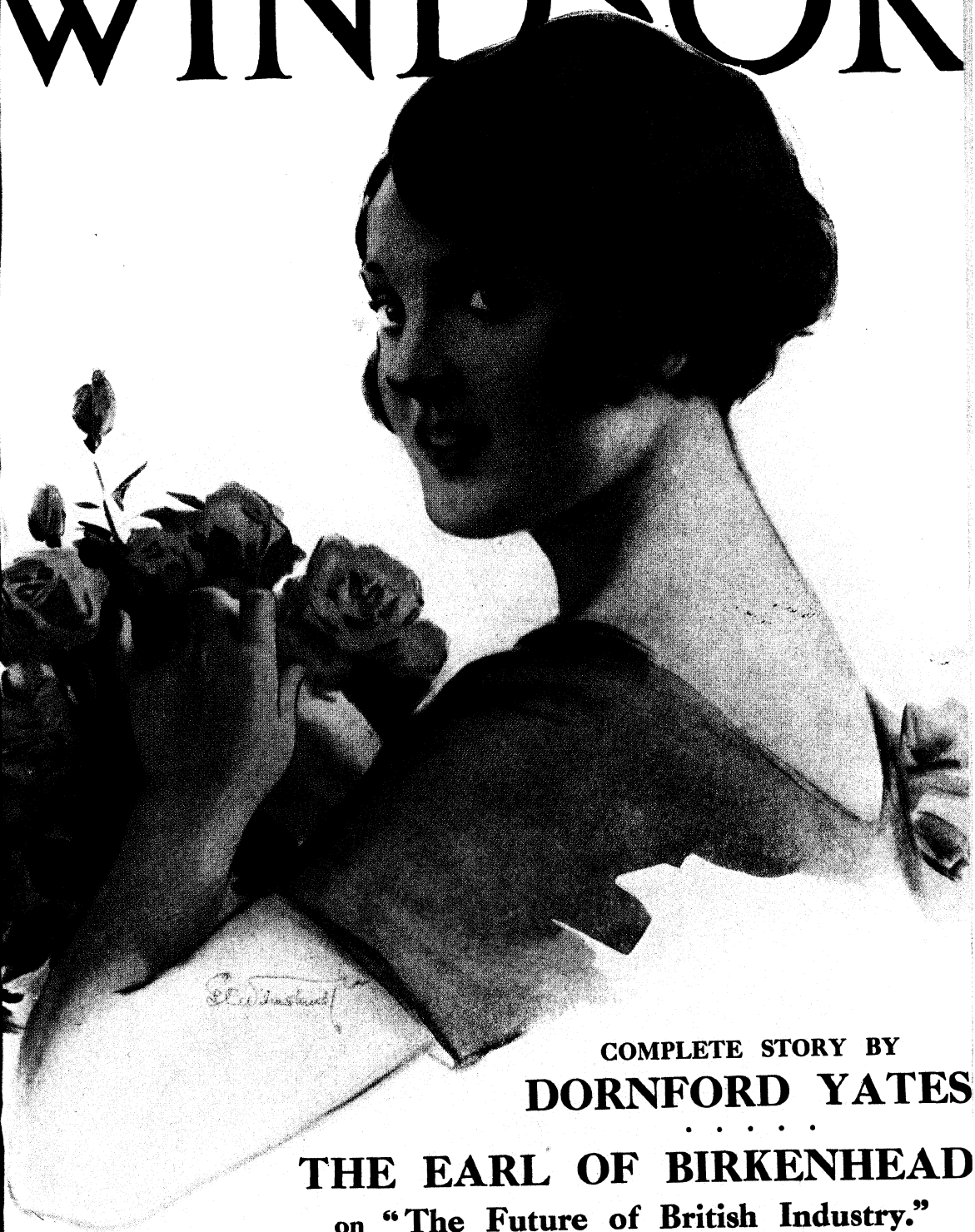
"Who is he, my dear?" panted a late-arrived dowager to a friend.

"Oh, really, don't you know? He is Henry Higgs, the champion cross-word puzzler of Lower Tooting."

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# THE WINDSOR



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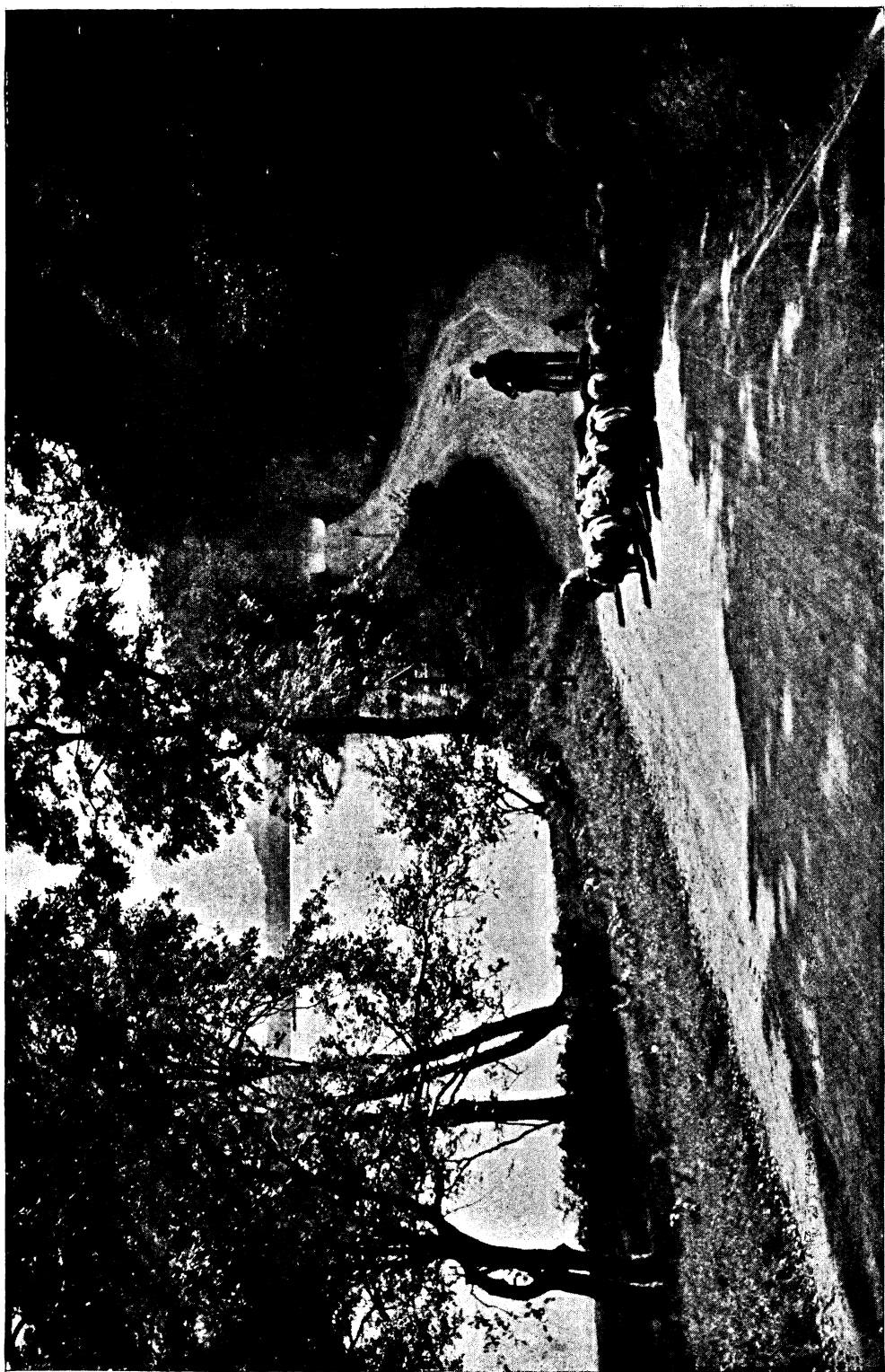
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"Of course I refused point-blank. A condemned murderer might as well have refused to be hanged. Judy was quiet, smiling and inevitable."

# CHILDISH THINGS

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "*As Other Men Are*," "*And Five Were Foolish*," "*Berry and Co.*," "*Valerie French*," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

CICELY RAGE'S letter reached me when I was in a receptive mood.

I had just returned from Harley Street, where I had rather childishly paid three guineas to be told what I already knew to be the truth.

"My dear sir, of course it's the concussion. If every vehicle were electrically propelled and ran upon comfort tires, or if eight years ago you hadn't been shot through the brain, London Town wouldn't

give you a headache to-day. As it is . . ."

"I know, I know. But the country in bad weather . . . I mean, last summer was awful. Besides, my friends . . ."

"Why don't you travel for a bit?" said the physician, rising. "And marry. Marry a nice, quiet girl."

"There aren't any left," said I.

He laughed and saw me out, and I drove to the Club.

Five minutes later the letter was in my hands.

March 28th.

Dear Adam,

*Toby and I have found a peach of a place, but it's too big for us alone. Will you come in? We can have it from now for six months. Up on the top of a hill, four bathrooms, private plage, quarter of an hour from Biarritz—and the rest. Please wire because we've got to decide. Too hot to write more.*

Cicely.

And overleaf was scrawled—

*This is a real good thing and the cellar is half full of Roederer 1914. I've bought that, any way—just in case.*

Toby.

It was absurdly vague and ridiculously attractive. 'Too hot to write more.' I raised my eyes from the sheet. In St. James's Street a fine snow was falling. . . .

After a little reflection I sent my reply.

*I will come in and shall leave for Biarritz on Thursday next.*

I was really extraordinarily thankful.

I had known and loved Cicely for twenty years, and Toby had chosen me to be his best man. Indeed, they were, both of them, after my own heart. They were reasonable and did reasonably in an unreasonable age. They liked the high lights, rejoiced in revelry, could lift a dragging party into a blazing success: but their lives were not founded upon these things and never had been. They could dine alone together for a month and afterwards sit by the fire and find each sober evening a refreshing festival. One of their closest friends was a High Court Judge who had never entered a Casino and drank cocoa with every meal. The two were pre-war.

But for the invitation I do not know what I should have done.

Thanks to a patient sniper, for seven long years I had been at a very loose end—an existence which may suit some men, but was to me obnoxious. The Boleyns have always been Heralds, and, but for that enemy marksman, I should have been engaged at the College of Arms. I was not made to be idle, and hated the state: neither was I made to dwell in the countryside—at least, not alone: finally, to set down the truth, I did not seem to have been made to enjoy the post-war world. Fashions, outlook, the spirit and manners of the age—I found the lot beyond me.

To condemn them would have been presumptuous. I merely deplored the fact that I could not adapt myself to their demands. The dance of life had altered, and I could not master the steps. So I had withdrawn from the struggle and gone back to what was left of the old highways which people used to tread before the War, passing along them soberly and for the most part alone, and occasionally wondering whether, after all, the sniper had not known better than the surgeons who saved my life.

I was a young fogey.

My life was orderly to the last degree. Nothing was ever out of place. I never hurried, because I was always in time. The groove I was in was always swept and garnished. Regularity and Convenience became my gods. I hated them bitterly, but so often as I offended against their laws I was plagued with regret and depression within the hour. At such moments I began to understand why men who have no worries sometimes find life too much for them.

'And marry.'

As I drove back to my flat, I decided that she would have to be very, very quiet. . . .

One advantage of being at a loose end for seven years is that you and your servants become mobile. On Wednesday morning all my arrangements were complete. Banner was to take the big baggage, and Wiseman and I were to go down to Biarritz by car.

Cicely's wire was delivered about midday.

*Splendid my dear please bring Judy.*

Supposing rather bitterly that the weather at Biarritz was still too hot to permit of detailed correspondence, I decided that to wire for information would be to court trouble. Judy was probably a dog—possibly a lady's maid, and my arrangements provided for the conveyance of neither; but if Judy's instructions were as blunt as mine, it was more than likely that before the lady reported I should be on the road.

Indeed, by six o'clock that evening I was growing quite confident. . . .

Then quite suddenly the door-bell was rung, and I knew it was all over. The same bell had been rung quite half a dozen times since Cicely's wire had arrived, but there was an ominous resolution about this particular peal which there was no mistaking.

I sat extremely still on the arm of a chair, listening to Banner's footsteps and wondering why on earth I hadn't gone to the Club.

The next moment the door was burst

open by an enormous 'Alsatian, which crossed the floor in one bound, put its forepaws on my shoulders, knocked me backwards into the lap of the chair, and, having me thus at a disadvantage, proceeded exuberantly to lick my face.

Somebody began to wail with laughter.

When I could do so, I rose.

At the other end of the lead, that is to say, about five feet away, stood a girl with the finest eyes that ever I saw. They were big and grey and steady, and once you had seen them it was hard to look away. I didn't try. The rest of her fitted in. Her hair was thick and dark and curly—cut, of course: her eyebrows were straight, and her nose aquiline. She had a glorious colour and an exquisite mouth. On her head was a little peaked hat that would have done for Rosalind, and below that a squirrel coat that came as far as her knees. The rest was pale silk stockings and patent-leather slippers as small as you please.

"My name's Sentinel," she said. "And I know you're Captain Boleyn. I'm very sorry."

"Not at all," said I, shaking the whiskey and soda out of my sleeve. "Won't you sit down?" She took a seat on the table, while the dog climbed into my chair. I pointed to the darling. "Don't say that's Judy," I added brokenly.

For a moment Miss Sentinel stared: then she gave a light laugh.

"Good Heavens, no," she said. She hesitated, regarding me curiously. Then, "May I have a cigarette?"

"You're too young to smoke," said I, opening a box. "But here you are."

As I lighted a match—

"But I've come about Judy," she said. "What train are you going by?"

"I'm not going by train. I'm going down in the car."

"I thought perhaps you would," said the girl, swinging a leg. "Well, that's all right. Judy won't take up much room."

"I'm not certain she'll take up any room," said I severely. "When I know what—"

"But Cicely said——"

"I know. It's a way that Cicely has. But I'm not going to travel a maid six hundred miles by road. Besides, it's a coupé."

"Whoever heard of a maid called Judy?" said Miss Sentinel.

"No one," said I stoutly. "But that's not my fault. I don't know what Judy is. But I know Cicely. And for those two

most excellent reasons I reserve the right, upon being shown Judy, to refuse to convey her."

Miss Sentinel tilted her chin.

"I am Judy," she said.

\* \* \* \* \*

Looking back, I assume I was bewitched.

Of course I refused point-blank. A condemned murderer might as well have refused to be hanged.

Judy was quiet, smiling and inevitable.

"Cicely said that I should be safe in your hands."

"That's not the point."

"It's my point."

Half an hour later I took her down in the lift, utterly vanquished and listening to Judy's terms.

Then I returned and broke the news to Banner.

"Mrs. Rage has asked me to take that young lady with me. She's got to go out to Biarritz, and she's rather too young to travel so far alone. You'll take her big baggage with mine."

"Very good, sir. And the dog, sir? Will the dog go with you?"

"The dog is not going," I said boldly.

I was quite wrong.

The dog travelled in the coupé.

I hate to advertise my departure from Town. I like to leave for America with no more outward signs than I give when leaving for Sandown. But before we started on Thursday most of St. James's must have known that I was going to France, and Judy with me.

The most arresting moment of a crowded afternoon was that at which Judy indicated from about two tons of luggage those pieces which were indispensable to her convenience for the next three days.

Regardless of the onlookers, we stood on the pavement in Bury Street and argued it out.

"There's the car," I said. "It's one of the longest chassis built. But if you can get two cabin-trunks, a hat-box, two dressing-cases and a chauffeur into that boot——"

"I must have them," said Judy definitely.

"And that suit-case too. My bedroom slippers are in that."

There was an awful silence.

"All right," I said at last. "Wiseman must take it by train and pick us up each night."

"If I could repack," said Judy, "I might get through with a trunk."

"Make it a dressing-case," said I.

"Very well."

The stuff was lugged upstairs, and Judy 'repacked,' calling to me for advice from time to time.

"How many stockings shall I want, Captain Boleyn?"

"Six pairs," I said glibly. It seemed the easiest way.

It was when we were downstairs again that she remembered her sponge-bag.

As Banner went to find it—

"Could you put it in your pocket?" said Judy. "I'm always so afraid of its wetting something."

"So be it," I said grimly.

That her fears were well founded I saw from Banner's face. . . . A towel was fetched, the bag was unpacked on the pavement and a pint and a half of water was wrung into the gutter. The homely operation was witnessed and enjoyed by several strangers, some of whom offered advice.

We started at last, an hour and three-quarters late.

I stopped inexplicably in Knightsbridge to buy her some flowers, and at Hammer-smith Judy discovered that her wrist-watch was not on her wrist. We went back that time, but when later we had passed Purley and she remembered that Nanette's biscuits had been left in the hall, I hardened my heart.

I let the car go, but dusk was falling as we ran out of Lewes. Then Nanette had to 'have a run.' I pulled up with some misgivings, and Judy opened the door. Nanette sprang out and disappeared in a wood. . . .

Nanette is not a good name to shout, but we all did it. Judy, Wiseman and I shouted and yelled 'Nanette' for fifty sodden minutes into the night. Judy shouted from the car, I shouted from the road and Wiseman shouted from the recesses of the wood. Finally Nanette returned. She was very effusive, very wet, very happy and heavily coated with fish manure.

"Oh, how awful," said Judy, holding her delicate nose. "What did you say it was?"

"The polite name," said I, "is fertilizer."

"Is—is it anything like manure?" said Judy faintly.

"Almost exactly," I said.

"Then that's why," said Judy triumphantly. "She always rolls in manure if she gets a chance."

I tried not to scream. . . .

I shall always associate Newhaven with the ablutions of Nanette. These were

performed surreptitiously in a hotel bathroom by Wiseman and myself, took the best part of an hour, cost me two pounds in hush-money and constituted at once the most revolting and strenuous ritual to which in war or peace I have ever been called upon to subscribe.

Then we dined—at least, I watched Judy dine, which was almost as bad. Afterwards we walked on the quay. There were few enough people about and only one I knew: he was plainly the worse for wear and fast asleep. His name was Kenner, and we were at school together till he was fired. The stars were out and the sea was like a great fleece of black and silver.

Judy slid an arm through mine.

"I think the hotel people think we're eloping," she said.

"That," said I, "is more than probable."

"Well, I don't care," said Judy.

We walked the length of the quay.

"It's quite absurd," said Judy, "for me to go on calling you 'Captain Boleyn,' isn't it?"

"Idiotic," said I, "considering I've carried your sponge-bag."

"Then I shan't any more, Adam." For a moment she stared seawards. Then she peered up at my face. "Why are you nice to me?" I suppose I hesitated, for she went on swiftly. "I mean, I've messed everything up. I've made you late and tired you and crowded you out. We've come like a drunken circus instead of like—like Captain Boleyn."

"There spoke Miss Sentinel," said I—truthfully.

The girl frowned.

"I'm not always a child," she said.

"Sometimes I get, as Americans say, a hunch. So I sit up straight, and all of a sudden I'm wise." She withdrew her arm from mine. "Those sponges!" she cried. "And you ate nothing because you felt all sick—washing that filthy dog." She stamped her foot. "Why don't I think? Oh, I'm all upset at the way I behave. I might be nine and I'm really twenty-one."

"You have no age," I said. "That's the warrant you hold for all you do. I saw that the moment you came. And that's—that's why I'm nice to you, Judy." I took her arm and we turned landwards to the lights swaying on the water and the faint hiss of steam. "Don't you bother about it—just go straight on. Besides, Nanette was very good—stood like a lamb, and I wasn't really hungry."

"She is good, isn't she?" said Judy eagerly.

There was only one cabin available, and that was the one I had reserved. I like to think that Judy slept well. I did not sleep. The reek of disinfectant in the car was overpowering. Besides, I am out of the way of slumbering in my clothes. But I was ashore at dawn and had shaved and bathed and changed before she was up. As I went down to breakfast I came upon Wiseman cleaning a small pair of shoes. . . .

The idea was to stay at Tours, but I gave that up. 'Fresh woods and pastures new' call for inspection: this was the very first time that Judy had been in France.

I got her out of Rouen by three o'clock, and two hours later I sighted the spires of Chartres.

When I pointed them out to Judy she jumped up and down, and Nanette got up on the seat and mauled us both.

"Yes," I said, "that's the place where we're going to stay: and now be a good little girl and listen to me."

"Go on," said Judy.

"I have decided," I said "to stay in the same hotel."

"As what?"

"As you."

Miss Sentinel opened her eyes.

"But why on earth not?" she said.

"Convention," I said. "It isn't usually done."

"Oh, blow Convention," said Judy, pushing Nanette into place and dragging her scrap of a skirt to cover her knees.

"I'm going to blow Convention, but she's got to be blown my way."

Judy laid her head on my shoulder and rubbed her cheek up and down.

"I love little Adam,

His coat is so warm,

And if I don't hurt him,

He'll do me no harm."

I didn't know whether to laugh or whether to cry. . . .

To stay in the same house was out of all order, yet how could I leave her alone in a strange hotel? There was Nanette, of course, but— Oh, it was unthinkable.

"Look here, Judy," said I. "The general idea is for me to be within call, and the pet, particular, special is to prevent the public from thinking that we have, er, eloped."

"Why?"

"Because I'm funny like that. Now then. I'm going to drive to the station and pick up a cab. Wiseman will take my place and

drive you to the hotel. It will be your car, and he will be your chauffeur. You are a lady of consequence, travelling alone. You and Wiseman will forget about me—I shan't exist any more. Meanwhile I shall come on, having travelled by train. I shall arrive after you and take a room. We may meet at dinner, but you mustn't know me—"

"From Adam," said Judy swiftly. "But this is silly. Why shouldn't we meet by accident in the hotel? That's natural enough."

I swallowed.

"All right," I said reluctantly. "I suppose we can run into each other in the dining-room: but you must play up and take your cue from me. And you're not to go out without Wiseman."

"But I want to see the Cathedral."

"I'll meet you there to-morrow: and to-night—remember, I shall be there if you need me. It's not a big house, and you've only to call my name. But that's an emergency measure. Otherwise—"

"I think it's a stupid game," said Judy. "I was looking forward to to-night. I wanted you to take me to the movies."

"I can't help it," said I doggedly.

"You can't love me," said Judy, shaking her head. "And I was just beginning to think you did."

"I expect that's it," said I.

In dudgeon Miss Sentinel lighted a cigarette.

I got out of the car at the station, and Wiseman extracted my case. I explained the position briefly.

"Remember," I concluded solemnly, "Miss Sentinel is in your charge. Pretend I've gone back to England and you've got to see her through. You'll take the dog out, of course."

"Very good, sir. And if there's any trouble. . . ."

"There mustn't be any trouble."

"Very good, sir." He looked about him.

"I don't see a cab, sir."

"There'll be one in a minute. Carry on."

As the car slid away Judy blew me a kiss.

There was not a cab in a minute. After a quarter of an hour I decided to walk. The way lay uphill, and my coat was not made for walking: neither, for the matter of that, was my dressing-case made to be carried: it was made to be wheeled or lifted by two very strong men. The thought, however, of Judy pricked me along. . . .

I asked for a room with a bathroom,

hoping hard against hope. When they said there was one available, I could have thrown up my hat. Then my case was shouldered, and I followed it up.

Of course we were next door.

I might have guessed that would happen, and I didn't know for a moment whether to be sorry or glad. Our bathrooms were separated by a lath and plaster wall—French laths, French plaster—probably run up by a plumber's apprentice during the Christmas recess. I could have done it better myself. It was certainly sight-proof, but I could hear Nanette lapping water as soon as I entered my room.

As the porter closed my door—

"Adam, dear," said Judy.

"Be quiet," said I. "Go away. Supposing it hadn't been me."

"I heard your voice," said Judy indignantly. "I heard you say '*De la bière.*' I wish I'd thought of beer—the tea's rotten."

"For Heaven's sake, stop," said I. "The man'll be back in a minute."

"All right. Did you get a cab?"

Here a waiter entered to ask if I wanted some beer.

"Did you get a cab?" repeated Judy.

The waiter's face was a study.

I gave the order fiercely and then told Judy off.

"You've torn everything up," I raged.

"Then, if I have," said Judy, "we may as well talk."

I replied by slamming my bathroom door. . . .

The beer calmed me down. Moreover, my walk from the station had reduced a bath from the order of luxurious to the ranks of necessary things.

Presently I opened the door like a thief in the night.

"At last," said Judy. "My dear, you've got my sponge-bag."

If I had been quick, I should have sworn I'd lost it. But I am not quick.

I said, "By George, so I have."

"Well, what about it?" said Judy. "The easiest way would be to push it through the wall, but I suppose you won't do that."

"You must do without it," said I.

"Don't be indecent," said Miss Sentinel. "I'll tell you what to do."

"What?"



"I'm sorry to interrupt, but I've got to live, and the Yankee Press won't wait. Minna Sentinel's name in Richmond is just about twice life-size."



“What d'you want?” I said.”

“We’ve each got a balcony. If you’re a good shot, you could throw it across.”

That seemed an idea.

As I opened the window I was glad to see it was dark.

“Don’t try to catch it,” I said. “Let it fall and then pick it up.”

Of course she tried to catch it, and of course it fell into the street. People were passing and I heard them start and exclaim. Judy began to shriek with laughter. . . .

I don’t know what I said, but everyone was very polite and understanding. The peals of laughter alone would have disarmed an inquisitor. I had to laugh myself as I threw it up from the street. Then I bowed very low.

“A votre service, Madame.”

“Merci, Monsieur,” cried Judy in a ravishing tone.

I returned somewhat comforted. The episode had been shared with those in the street. The hotel had seen nothing.

During our baths I made Miss Sentinel promise that,

if I consented to converse when we were upstairs, outside our respective doors we should appear utter strangers. The recognition in the dining-room was definitely washed out, and we were not to address one another publicly till we were ready to leave the city. The rendezvous was to be the Cathedral.

I let her go down first and gave her five minutes’ grace in case of accidents. Then I descended the stairs.

Afterwards it transpired that she had forgotten a handkerchief.

Be that as it may, we met face to face in the lounge. I saw her coming when she was ten yards away. And she saw me. What is much more to the point, so did



Nanette. . . . I might have been her long-lost whelp.

With a whimper of delight the great dog sprang upon me, bringing her mistress in her train. I was licked furiously, fawned upon, pawed, flogged with an excited tail. Judy was licked and embraced. I said "Down, Nanette," and was licked and buffeted again. Judy caught at my arm and fell into tremulous mirth. And Nanette, having done her bit, began to bark. . . .

The whole hotel was laughing, and Convention was sent empty away.

We dined together, shared a bottle of Cliquot and went to a cinema in great contentment.

At least, I extracted a promise that she would not address me upstairs.

I felt that Convention ought to have those crumbs.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was two days later, as we were nearing Angoulême, that I felt a familiar chill strike into my limbs.

My malaria is nothing serious. Sometimes a year goes by without an attack. But when the bouts come they come swiftly, and while they last I am completely out of action.

Mercifully the city was only ten miles away.

My one idea was to get there while I could drive. . . .

I did it, but my body was shaking as I whipped up the winding hill, and as I turned into the yard I felt Judy catch at my arm.

"Adam!"

"N-nothing," I chattered. "Only——"

"You're ill, Adam. My dear, you're terribly ill. Your face. . . ."

"N-no. Malaria, Judy. It's n-nothing at all. I've had it m-millions of times. W-Wiseman knows. I've g-got quinine in my d-dressing case."

"You must have a doctor at once."

"No, no. Ask Wiseman. I'm speaking the absolute t-truth. But I must get to bed. It's n-nothing, honestly."

The hotel staff thought I was dying, but I laughed them away. Then they gave me a room and I hurried upstairs.

"L-look after Miss Sentinel, Wiseman. D-don't leave the place. Where is she now?"

"I don't know, sir," said Wiseman, unpacking my case.

"Well, g-go and find out."

"When you're in bed, sir," said Wiseman stubbornly. . . .

I was frightfully, hideously hot. The sheets burned me and the pillows seemed to be on fire. It was only a phase, of course. I knew it of old. And of old I had found it interminable. My brain was aching, and my body was racked with pain. But the heat was the worst of all. I was being consumed. The room was dim, and I wondered if it was night. I wanted very badly to know the time. The last thing I could remember was being blue with cold. No. A long, hot flush, warming my shaking limbs—the beginning of the bad stage. That was what I remembered. How long ago was that? Three hours or three minutes. The bad stage is the devil for magnifying time. You lose your bearings in an instant. Your standards are subverted. You've nothing to go by, except the torment, and that's as shifting as the sea—no use at all as a rule. You can't measure by the length of a wave: the wave expands and contracts like an unsteady flame, so that your reckoning's wrong before you've made it. And always when you least expect it the sweat breaks out. And then it's all over. It's very simple—and harmless. Only, at the time it's like death. I would have sold my soul to know the time. . . .

"Poor old fellow," said Judy, laying a hand on my brow.

I sat up and tried to argue, but she made me lie down at once and covered me up.

"Your reputation," I cried. "Judy, I beg you to go."

"Hush, dear," said Judy gently. "I knew you'd say that. And listen."

"I won't. I can't. Where's Wiseman? I told him——"

"My reputation is safe. They think I'm your wife."

I sat up again at that, but she pushed me back.

"Wiseman is calling me 'Madam,' and I rushed out and bought a ring."

I stared at the thin gold circlet and tried to speak, but either because I was voiceless or because of the fire in my brain I could say nothing. After a moment I took the little pink hand and put its palm to my lips.

Judy held it there tight and hid her face in the sheets. . . .

At last the sweat broke and the fever began to fall.

At ten o'clock that night I was perfectly well.

After some supper had been served I sent

for Wiseman, and when he had shut the door I made him a little speech.

"It sometimes happens, Wiseman, that something we would particularly like to remember we have to forget. When I say that, I am speaking for you and me. But I am speaking for Miss Sentinel too when I say that *we are all three going to forget that we have ever seen a city called Angoulême*. If we have never seen it, it is obvious that we can never have stayed there, and that when we reach Biarritz, as we shall to-morrow evening, we must have come from Tours in the day, stopping nowhere at all and eating our luncheon by the wayside."

"Very good, sir."

I turned to Judy, curled in a chair by my side and smoking a cigarette.

"It's time my lady was in bed." I put out my hand. "Good night, Judy, and thank you very, very much." For a moment the girl regarded me. Then she slipped to her feet and took my hand. "I've never come through a go so quickly or easily before. You were just wonderful."

"Rot," said Judy. She passed to the bathroom which lay between our rooms. "I think in the morning you'd better have the first bath. Will you knock on the door when you're done?"

"I will."

Still she lingered, with her hand in Nanette's collar and her eyes on her cigarette.

"If you'd another attack, you'd call me, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," I said. "It'd be silly not to."

Judy's face lighted, and all her sovereign charm came flooding into her eyes.

"You're getting quite sensible," she said. "Good night, Wiseman."

"Good night, madam."

The next moment she was gone.

I looked at Wiseman.

"Go and get a drink," I said. "And take off your leggings and boots. You've got to spend the night in this room."

"Very good, sir."

Scurvily or no, Convention had to be served.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is this Biarritz?" said Judy suddenly.

"Not quite," said I, with my eyes on the splash of white which the headlights made. "But it's very close now."

There was a silence.

Presently Judy laughed.

"Some trip," she said. "I'll bet you won't fall over yourself to convoy a girl

again." She turned swiftly and laid a hand on my arm. "It sounds stupid, I know, but I'm very grateful. I know I've been very trying. But you've been a dear, Adam. Nobody could have been sweeter."

"Nonsense," I said feebly.

"And I've enjoyed every minute—at your expense."

I shook my head.

"I have—you know it. When I look back I'm ashamed. That awful scene at Chartres." She clapped her hands to her face. "Why on earth am I like this? What's the matter with me? Other women behave—don't let themselves go. Look at my hat." This was lying on Nanette. Judy snatched it up. "And my skirt—at least, don't." Judy dragged this down. "Of course I shall take a bad toss one of these days. Someone'll put it across me—publicly: and that'll make me think. Some other woman, you know—someone who counts. With the sweetest smile and a drawl and a voice like silk. And she'll rip the skin off my back with what she says."

"May I be there," I said grimly, "Miss Sentinel."

"Good old Adam," said Judy. "You'd try and put it back, wouldn't you? Or would that be too familiar? I mean, Convention—"

"You wicked child," said I.

Judy pulled on her hat and smoothed down her dress.

"I've strayed," she said. "I set out to thank you, Adam."

"You've nothing to thank me for. I'm in your debt."

"I don't know when, if ever, I'll see you again, and—"

"What?"

I started so violently that the car swerved.

"At Biarritz," said Judy coolly, "I've got to sort of report. And I'll have to do as I'm told. If the people I'm joining want to push off to-morrow, to-morrow I fade away. But I hope they won't. I want to see something of Cicely. And Toby. I like Toby, don't you?"

"Oh, burn Toby," said I. "What d'you mean—'fade away'? What's the good of my bringing you out to Biarritz, if you're going to clear out the next day?"

"To join my crowd, of course. As I say, they may want to stay or they may want to go. Any way, I don't see how it affects you, Adam. You've—"

"No, I don't suppose you do," said I savagely.

Miss Sentinel tilted her chin.

"I was going to say you could write to me," she said. "But I don't think I shall now. Oh, and please stop, will you? I want to change my stockings before we get in."

I stopped by the side of the road, and Nanette and Wiseman and I descended and took a turn.

As I resumed my seat—

"Now I'm all nice and fresh," said Judy comfortably.

"That's imagination," I said. "You're always that."

"Am I really, Adam?"

I nodded.

It was true. She always looked a picture. Even after a run of a hundred miles she was the pink of daintiness.

"The best of you," said Judy, taking my arm, "is that you mean what you say. Now I know that I'm always nice and fresh. And I know that I've got pretty feet—you said that too. But I'm rather upset about my hair—you've never mentioned that: and up to now I've always been rather proud of it."

"It's the best I've ever seen."

We covered a mile in silence.

"Is this Biarritz?" said Judy.

"Yes."

Judy let go my arm and sat up in her seat. I drove to the Palais Hotel.

As we entered the grounds, I put her hand to my lips.

Judy caught her breath.

"Oh, my—my sponge-bag," she said.

Between us we dragged it out.

"Souvenir," murmured Judy.

"What did you say?"

Miss Sentinel shook her head.

As the car came to rest—

"There's Cicely," cried Judy, pointing into the lounge. She turned about and gave me her little hand. "Good-bye, Adam dear, and thank you so very much."

"I've loved it," I said.

She and Nanette got out and stormed the place.

I saw her and Cicely meet. Then I let in the clutch and drove to the Carlton Hotel. . . .

I always feel in its pockets before I take off a coat.

The one which had held her sponge-bag contained a wedding-ring.

'Souvenir.'

\* \* \* \* \*

I met the Rages next morning at ten o'clock.

"Nunc, nunc," said Toby. "I tell you it's a fruit of a place. And the champagne wine. Thirty dozen, father. . . ." Reverently he raised his eyes. "Amminadab's over there now—fixing things up."

"Who's Amminadab?" said I.

"Amminadab is the fourth," said Cicely Rage. "She's a most charming girl. American and foolishly rich. A quarter of a million a year or something like that. If you don't get off, Adam, I'll never forgive you."

"That's right," said Toby. "You'll soon get used to her feet."

"She's one of the best," said Cicely stoutly. "What are you doing this morning?"

"Nothing," said I, like a fool.

"Then Rooster can drive you over. Toby and I are playing golf. I want you to tell Amminadab. . . ."

I listened to my instructions with a sinking heart.

I didn't want to tell Amminadab anything.

I wanted. . . .

When Cicely gave me a chance—

"How's Judy this morning?" said I.

"Yesterday was a hell of a run."

"She seemed fit enough," said Cicely.

"She and her mammoth burst into my room this morning as though they'd slept for a week. It was awfully sweet of you to bring her, Adam. You know, I felt afterwards perhaps I shouldn't have asked you because she's so utterly lawless. But she really isn't safe to travel alone."

"That's a hard fact," said I. "But we really got on very well. What I don't understand is why you—"

"She sent a message to you," said Cicely Rage. "She wants you to come to lunch. So you'd better push off to Iriberry if you're to be back in time."

"Nunc, nunc," said Toby. "It's a fruit of a place. Tell Amminadab to show you the champagne wine."

Iriberry was dazzling.

The house was white and low, and the roof was red, and the shutters were myrtle green. It stood in a big property, and as you whipped to and fro up the curling drive you had first the sea at your feet and then the mountains, with a pageant of woods and valleys in between.

I found it all quite loveiy—with lunch in my mind's eye.

As the car swept to the steps Cicely's maid appeared.

She showed me into a handsome living room which opened on to a terrace commanding Spain. The windows were set wide open, and instinctively I stepped outside. For a moment I regarded the prospect, which was superb. Then came the rush of a body, and Nanette nearly knocked me down. . . .

I dealt with her welcome feebly, as a man who will brush aside a vision. . . .

Judy was standing in the window, leaning against the jamb, watching us both and laughing, with the grandest light in her eyes.

I don't know how long I stood there, but after a little I just put out my arms and she flung hers round my neck.

"D'you love me, Adam?"

"I'm mad about you," I faltered.

"That's right," said Judy, rubbing her cheek against mine. "I like you to be mad about me. I'm going to marry you, of course. Perhaps I'll sober down then. I'm Amminadab, you know. Toby invented the name."

"I can quite believe that," said I. "In fact, I can see his hoof-marks all over the place. Why did you give me the ring?"

"I don't know. It was all I had. And I wanted to give you something because I loved you so."

"Judy, Judy!"

"But, my dear," said Judy, smoothing my hair. "I couldn't help it. Men either get wild with me or try to kiss me. Always. But you did neither."

"I was shot through the brain in the War."

"That isn't why. You understood, Adam."

I let her go; then I took her little hands.

"There was nothing to understand," I said. "You don't have to understand the sea or the sky—or a flower of the forest, Judy. You just thank God for them."

Judy put up her mouth.

"We'll go away when we're married. D'you know where I'd like to stay?"

"Yes."

I produced the ring.

"That's right. They were very nice, and when they called me 'Madame' I felt all thrilled."

"It was my proudest moment, Judy, when Wiseman said good-night."

"You see," said Judy, "it really comes to this. Convention's all right in her place: but when you get two people——"

Nanette growled there and rose in one bristling piece.

In a flash Judy had her by the collar, and I swung round to see Kenner at the foot of the terrace steps. . . .

"Good morning, Boleyn," said he. "Can I have a word with you?"

I stared and so did he.

I hadn't spoken to the fellow for sixteen years.

"What d'you want?" I said.

"Well, it's like this," he said. "I'm sorry to interrupt, but I've got to live, and the Yankee Press won't wait. Minna Sentinel's name in Richmond is just about twice life-size."

"D'you mean that you're a reporter?"

"Well, I'm not on the staff," said he, "but they know my name. My special stunt is—idylls." He took out a little book. "Can you tell me your plans? I just want to round this off. I'm told this is Iriberri—that'll look well in print. But so will Chartres, and so will—Angoulême."

I turned to Judy and spoke in an undertone.

"Rooster's outside with the car. Tell him to drive you to Biarritz. Find Wiseman and bring him here."

When I heard the room's door close I passed to the top of the steps.

"You're a pretty blackguard, Kenner. You always were."

"What's in a name?" said Kenner. He put up his book and lighted a cigarette. "But I know a cinch by sight. D'you know what she's worth, Boleyn?"

"You can leave her out," I said.

He raised his eyebrows.

"You must be pretty rich. This isn't a question of a monkey in a couple of goes."

"There's nothing doing, Kenner."

He frowned.

"Why take this line, Boleyn? I've got you cold. You know it as well as I do. Don't think I'm suggesting things. I know you're much too pi. But you know what the papers are. Or perhaps you don't." He jerked his head at the ocean. "Our hottest rag's a prayer-book to what they set over there."

"They'll print nothing of this," said I.

"No," said Kenner, "I don't suppose they will. It's too—what shall we say? Sacred?"

"That's a very good word."

"Or 'valuable'?"

I shook my head.

"It's of no value," I said.

Kenner laughed.

"Why try to bluff me?" he said. "You

haven't a card in your hand. And if you had I could pull it before your eyes. D'you know who you're up against?"

"I've told you once."

"Then why don't you order me off?"

I said nothing, because there was nothing to say, but I willed him with all my might to mount the steps.

The man had to be crushed. He meant what he said. Judy and I were at bay, and he meant to keep us there. He meant to live on our nerves for the rest of his life. Pay once, pay twice. I knew. I could see it there in his eyes. 'I know a cinch by sight.' I had known what must happen before he had spoken twice, and I had sent Judy for Wiseman to help me to bury my dead.

I do not expect to be commended or even excused. A cleverer man than I would have found another way out. But I am not at all clever—and I had my back to the wall.

So we stood in silence—he at the foot of the flight and I at the head, and, between us, half-way up, a little fawn-coloured glove, lying where Judy had dropped it before I came.

The sun was blazing, and Kenner stood, a black smudge on a golden world. The silence was infinite: it seemed to consist of the steady drone of insects and the pulse of the distant surf.

Kenner was speaking.

"Why don't you order me off?"

"Because we don't want you to go," said Judy gently.

Both of us jumped. I think. I know I did.

Judy came and stood at the top of the steps.

"I don't know what Adam's been saying, but he doesn't understand." She laid a hand on my arm. "He's English, you see. But I know the American papers, and they'll fairly eat this up. And I don't mind a bit—I've had it since I was ten and father died. They haven't known where I was for the last six months, but they'll stand up now and shout." She turned to me. "Don't forbid him, Adam. It may help him, and it can't do us any harm."

Kenner's face was a study.

He didn't know what to say or what to do.

Presently he moistened his lips.

"You'd better explain, Boleyn."

"I think that's your job," said I.

Judy knitted her brows.

"What is there to explain?"

Kenner cleared his throat.

"Boleyn's afraid your trip won't read very well. You see, Miss Sentinel, if I may say so, you rather defied Convention."

"I know," said Judy, smiling. "In fact, we left her behind." She turned to me. "My darling, that's why the papers are going to eat this up. They simply worship scandal." She returned to Kenner. "You know they thought we were married at Angoulême?"

Kenner began to look scared.

He swallowed violently.

"D'you want the Press to get that?" he blurted.

"Why not?" said Judy simply.

Kenner recoiled. "They will any way—probably have by now. I gave three interviews last night and one this morning. And I told all four what happened at Angoulême." She turned to me. "I know you wanted to keep it quiet, my dear, but that was hopeless. And so it was better to tell them. They'd only have found it out and got it wrong."

There was a deadly silence.

Then Kenner's forgotten cigarette burned its way to his fingers and he flung it down with an oath.

"I'm sorry," said Judy swiftly, addressing his obvious chagrin, "but I didn't tell them my plans. You see, I hadn't any then. But you can announce our engagement."

"Thanks," said Kenner thickly, with a bitter laugh. "But an anti-climax hardly earns its keep. Besides, I—I guess that's assumed."

"I don't think it is," said Judy earnestly. "All of them wanted to announce it, but I said it'd be premature."

The queerest imaginable expression came into Kenner's face. He looked like a puzzled child, half-way to tears. As if to complete the illusion, a finger stole up to his mouth.

Presently he turned his head and stared at the sea. For a long time he stood like that: then, without moving, he spoke.

"Boleyn."

"Yes."

"Come here."

I left Judy's side and passed down the terrace steps.

"What is it?"

He took out his cigarette-case, but this was empty.

As he snapped it to—

"Don't tell her," he said.

"Very well."

I offered him my cigarettes, but he did not seem to see them and turned away. Then he looked up to Judy and took off his hat.

"Good-bye," he said.

"Good-bye," said Judy. "I'm sorry."

"That's all right," said Kenner. "Luck o' the game."

He turned and walked away the way he had come.

After a moment Nanette stole down and followed to see him out.

"Poor man," said Judy. "I'm afraid he was awfully disappointed. He thought

he'd got a peach of a scoop. I'd 've liked to offer him something, but one couldn't, could one?"

"No," said I.

Judy lifted her head and stared at the mountains of Spain.

"What shall we tell Wiseman?"

I looked at her open-mouthed.

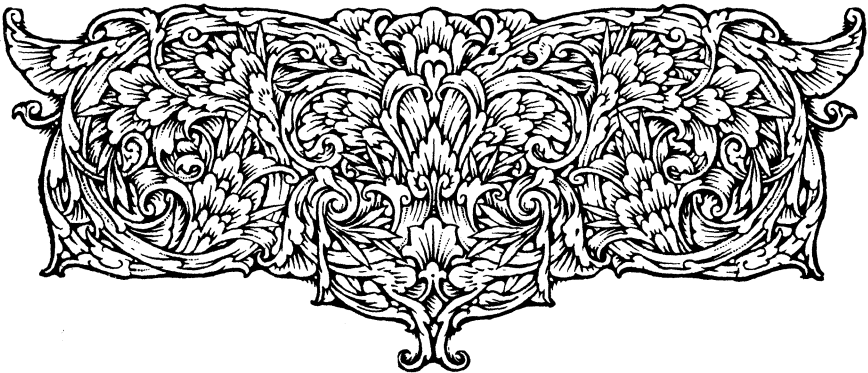
At last—

"You—you knew?" I stammered.

Miss Sentinel nodded. Then she slid an arm through mine.

"I told you," she said, "I wasn't always a child."

*The first story of a new series by Dornford Yates will appear in the next number.*



## AN INLAND CHANTY.

**H**AVE you heard the deep-sea chanties in the branches of the trees,  
When most boisterously landward lurches in the gusty breeze,  
Like a drunken sailor swinging on his stout sea-legs and singing  
Of the wonders of adventuring across the Seven Seas?

Harken, in the seething city know there is an ocean still,  
Blue and boundless, ever heaving, and revive the olden thrill,  
You who used to read of sailors, pirates, buccaneers and whalers,  
Hark! the wind is singing chanties with a right good sailor's will.

On the mainmast of the maple he is reefing in the sheet,  
While the slender elm tree saplings are a full-rigged sailing fleet,  
And if you will only hearken, when the night begins to darken,  
You can hear the distant breakers roaring all along the street.

You can hear the cables creaking, and the slapping of the sail,  
And the sea-gulls' mournful warning of the rising of the gale;  
While the ship careens to leeward as she beats her way to seaward,  
And you launch upon the ventures of a buccaneering tale.

DOROTHY CHOATE HERRIMAN.

# THE FUTURE OF BRITISH INDUSTRY

By THE RIGHT HON.  
THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, P.C.

IT is very desirable in dealing with a subject of such vast importance that we should face the indisputable facts with disillusioned eyes. The present position of British industry is extremely bad, nor are there at present any real prospects of improvement. It is, in fact, hardly an exaggeration to say that the economic situation of this country at this moment is as alarming as was its military situation in the gravest crisis of the War. Indeed, measured comparatively with the resiliency shown by the trade and commerce of this country after the Napoleonic Wars, the retrospect of the five years through which we have passed is full of gloom, perhaps even of menace.

The fundamental truths are so obvious and so elementary that it seems superfluous even to restate them, and yet they are so vital to our existence that they must be restated. We are not a self-supporting people. We live, and live only, on the condition that we are able to persuade the world to buy enough of our manufactured goods to pay for that which our subsistence requires at the hands of foreign nations. Either we succeed in doing this or we perish. The condition, in other words, of our subsistence as a world Power is that we are able so to adapt ourselves to the competitive conditions of the post-war world as to maintain an export trade, the profits of which alone can enable us to survive.

At present, let it be plainly stated, we are not doing so. The exchanges are against us. Some of our competitors are paying bounties to special trades with which we are in competition. The working men of our rivals are prepared to work for longer hours and in simpler conditions than our Trades Unions will permit.

Nothing can be more depressing—and I speak with intimate knowledge of the facts

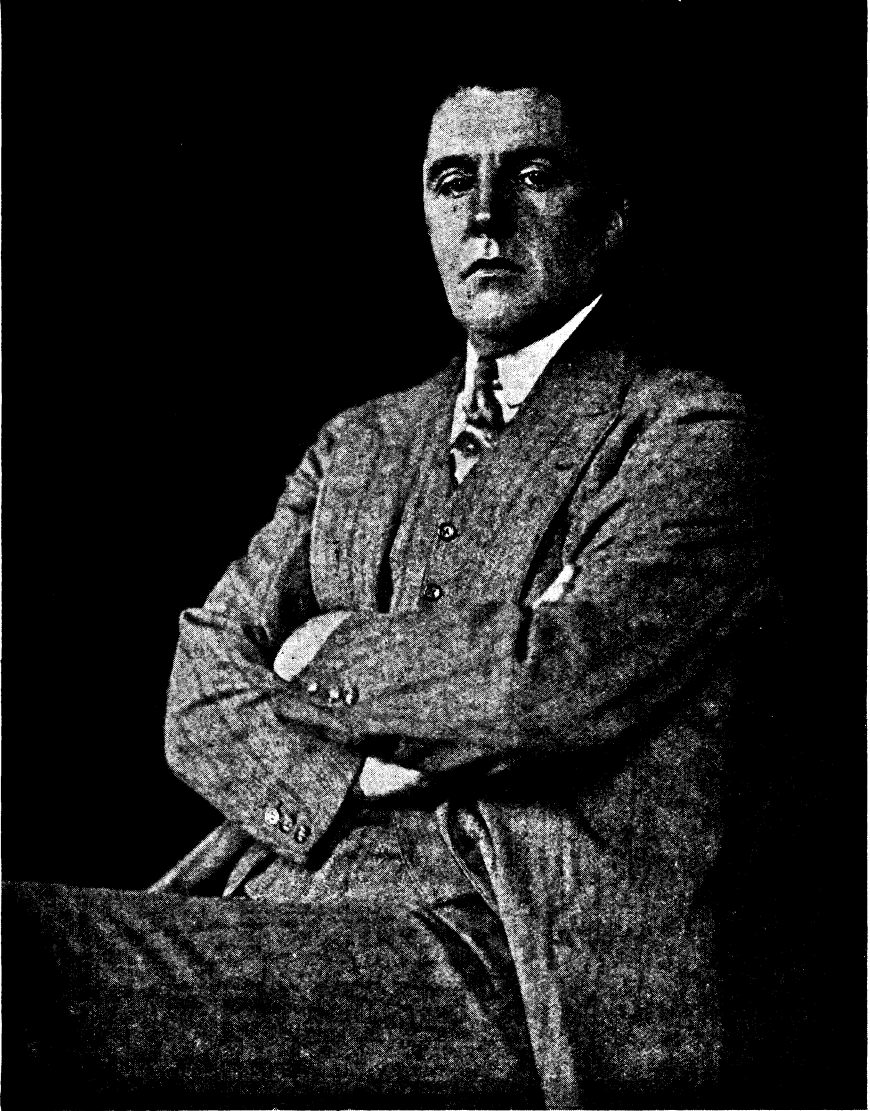
—than the condition of shipbuilding, iron and steel, engineering and coal, to-day. And yet if we cannot improve the condition of these vital industries, and equip them to compete with those who are to-day our rivals, the commercial life of this country cannot survive, and we shall perish industrially and imperially. I have said enough to make it plain that the prospect is beset with gloom. Is there, then, any hope? There is none, absolutely none, unless the working classes of this country can be taught the elements of the economic truth.

England, in the earlier conditions, made its name and established its commercial fortunes as a great industrial power as much by the resources and ingenuity of her manufacturers as by the honest toil and efficiency of her workers. The resources and ingenuity of her manufacturers have not diminished, but grave inroads have been made by Socialist and Communist teachings upon the efficiency of the working man of this country.

The plain but unpalatable truth is that there is in our present system a certain wage which we may describe as an economic wage, which, and which alone, a particular industry can support. If a higher wage is exacted by a Trades Union, perhaps through the agency of a strike, than that industry can economically afford, it becomes only a question of time before that industry is ruined and the workers cease to earn any wages at all and become unemployed. Take, for instance, the coal industry. The hours of labour have been curtailed, the wages of labour have been increased. The wages of railway men, affecting the cost of carrying coal, have also been increased. The result is that we are unable to sell our coal in competition with foreign rivals. The further result is that many coal mines

are closing down altogether, so that thousands are thrown out of employment and go upon the dole. One cannot, after all, expect that the proprietors of collieries should work these institutions upon philanthropic principles; they will work them in

who are engaged in the coal mining industry must realise is that they have a value in the world, and the means of getting their livelihood, so long, and so long only, as they can compete upon equal terms with other people getting coal in other countries.



*Photo by]*

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, P.C.

*[Vandyk.*

the existing conditions as long as they see the prospect of a reasonable return upon their expenditure. The moment they see no such prospect they will close them down.

The first truth, therefore, which those

It is no good saying we ought to work only for seven hours, or for six hours, or for five hours a day; it is no good saying we will not work unless our wages are upon such and such a scale. What they have to ask themselves, if they are soundly advised, is



this : What is the maximum wage that we can earn? What is the minimum period we can work which will, nevertheless, enable us to hold our own in the competition of the world? If they apply themselves to any other standard, they make it plain that they do not understand their own business. If their leaders encourage them to look to any other standard, they are either incompetent or dishonest. I suppose that those Trades Unionist leaders who are at the present moment giving bad advice to their followers in this particular branch of industry would say, if they were challenged : "The conditions indicated by us are the only tolerable conditions upon which we can advise our followers to work. If collieries cannot be kept going upon the condition that our stipulations are observed, the State must make good the deficiency by means of whatever subsidy may be necessary." Observe the ramifications of this doctrine. Other works are to be taxed in order that those who work in coal mines may be paid wages which the conditions of their own toil, as measured in the scale of world competition, do not justify.

The Socialist, of course, would say that if the coal mines were run by the State, the matter would be more easily dealt with. Would it? What warrant exists in the rich field of experience with which the poignant instances of the War presented us for such a conclusion? Were the railways better managed by a Government department than under private enterprise? Is there any reason for supposing that the coal mines of this country would be more profitably managed by a Government department than by private enterprise? If the result were not more favourable, who is to pay the loss involved in carrying on the unsuccessful enterprise? The plain and naked truth of the matter, of course, is that, great as are our natural riches in the matter of coal, if we cannot get those riches upon terms which enable us to compete with other coal-getting nations of the world, we shall be driven to abandon our collieries until the conditions of competition have become tolerable.

The whole question is one of elementary economics. If a State department ran all our collieries, it would run them in existing conditions, either upon a very small margin of profit or upon a loss. Is there any intelligible principle upon which, if the matter were run at a loss, the claim could be established that other wage-earners in

the country should contribute to that loss? It is, on the contrary, evident that workers at other industries would say with one accord : "You cannot pay your way. You are carrying on a business at a loss. We refuse to be taxed in order to maintain a waning and uneconomic industry." And so all the time we come back to this inflexible economic truth—an industry can only survive as long as it accommodates itself to the iron facts of a competitive international system. Socialism will provide no cure. It would merely provide a number of parasitic industries subsisting upon the contributions of others until these too, staggering under overwhelming and artificial burdens, had tottered to their ruin.

There is, therefore, no salvation for British trade, and there can be none, until the leaders of the Trades Unionist movement have the courage to explain to their followers what are the dominating economic facts underlying and defining our present anxieties.

I am sorry to say that there are few signs that the responsible leaders of the Trades Unionist movement have grasped the meaning of these economic axioms. If they have, they are wholly lacking in the courage to make them plain to those who look to them for guidance and advice.

The greatest cause for alarm is indeed furnished by the circumstances that those who are known as the leaders of labour are so frightened that they may be extruded from their position by the extremists that they seem to have lost the moral courage needed to give any guidance to their followers.

The Trades Unionist movement is one which has always commanded my sympathy. It was an association necessary, in its inception, to protect the interests of the workers. Without Trades Unions I say plainly that, in my opinion, the workers would not have obtained their fair share of that which they contributed to produce. For, in matters of self-interest, a sober judge, knowing alike the methods of employers and of labour, would trust neither employers nor labour to be the sole arbiters of a fair arrangement. And therefore Trades Unions have discharged in the past a useful and, indeed, an indispensable task in presenting the argument from the point of view of organised labour.

But the plain truth to-day—and it cannot be too openly stated—is that Trades Unions are more and more forgetting their legitimate functions and more and more

falling into the hands of extremist leaders. Many tendencies might be cited in illustration of the change that has taken place. The old Trades Union leaders were not in the least in favour of a limitation of output. They believed rather that every man should, within reasonable limits, work as long as his physical strength enabled him, making due allowance for recreation, and receiving extra wages for overtime work.

They were not concerned to insist that all labour should be divided into watertight compartments, so that a piece of work which could quite adequately be discharged by two men must necessarily be compelled to employ five. The American Trades Unions, under the leadership of Mr. Gompers, have avoided this particular form of economic folly. Indeed, the general view of an American working man, and of his leaders in industry, is that he should be entitled to work as long as he thinks he can work without injuring his health or sacrificing his recreations, and receive, if he feels strong enough to work overtime, such additional remuneration as his efforts have deserved. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that an American collier gets four times as much coal as an English collier. Make every allowance you like for the softer American seams; when all are made, and given their proper weight, they afford no explanation of the discrepancy between the two efforts.

And an even more scandalous illustration is presented by the building industry. This Trades Union is protected from foreign competition. It is a sheltered industry. The whole nation is crying for houses. Thousands of people who might, with great advantage to the State, enter upon the married condition are prevented by the absolute impossibility of finding houses. Hundreds of thousands of our population are rotting in slums. It is a literal truth that if the operatives in the building industry were allowed to work overtime, and encouraged to accept remuneration in terms of results, they could lay twice or thrice as many bricks a day as they are permitted in the terms of Trades Union tyranny.

The trades which are protected from foreign competition, as are the builders, can afford—if they are selfish and unpatriotic enough—to set themselves up against the needs of the nation. But how about the other trades? These fall under the iron economic rule upon which I have already

insisted—that when the last sloppy phrase has been used by the leaders of Communist thought, English working men can only earn a living wage if they are able, as their fathers were able before them, to compete upon equal terms with the working men of other countries.

The economic doctrines set forth in this article are so elementary that I am almost ashamed to labour them. They were very familiar to the old and trusted leaders of Trades Unionism in the past. I believe that they are very familiar to the present nominal leaders of Trades Unions. But here a circumstance presents itself as disquieting as it is sinister. It seems to me that more and more the sane and sober leaders of the Labour Party are losing alike their confidence and their nerve. Here and there a man like Mr. J. H. Thomas utters a word of sagacious counsel, but I find little evidence that his advice has pressed with the weight of authority upon the undisciplined forces which seem to me to have captured the Labour movement, and which destroyed the Government of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

I discern, on the contrary, signs of anarchy and of mutiny in the Trades Union movement. The man who shouts the loudest, and in the most extreme language, wins the loudest cheers. And to-day we are confronted with the phenomenon that apparently the British Labour movement is threatening to become the most extreme in the world, with the exception of that which has murdered its way to power in Russia. The Amsterdam International has refused to admit the revolutionary assassins of Russia into its Association, except upon terms which involve the surrender of the claim to rule at the hands of a minority. The so-called Russian proletariat is the absolute negation of Democracy. Nobody pretends that the Soviets command the majority of the Russian nation. They do not claim it themselves. They admit in terms that by force they have seized upon the supreme power in Russia, and are enforcing their decrees, if necessary at the point of the sword, upon an immense majority of their fellow-countrymen. The menace of Soviet practices to Democracy is far more formidable than that of the Fascisti movement. And yet we find that men claiming, and apparently with authority, to act on behalf of the Trades Unions of this country are attempting to involve these unions in a fraternal association with the anti-democrats

of Moscow, which has been repudiated by the International Socialists of Europe, and which is treated with contempt by the Socialists of the United States of America.

The significance of this development, which must be closely watched, is evident. It means that the new leaders of Trades Unions are not open to argument, economic or industrial. I cannot assume that they are so imbecile that they do not understand the truth as easily as the rest of us. They do not wish to understand it. They are riding for a smash; they care nothing for the consequences of a smash if they can collect in their hands the same kind of brutal minority control which has been asserted in Soviet Russia. These men are

the enemies of the human race; in particular they are the enemies of that ordered development of English life which first asserted our greatness in the world, and has since maintained it. They must be dealt with ruthlessly. In old days pirates were spoken of as *hostes humani generis*. The men whose pretences and menaces I am examining to-day fall within the same class. If the older leaders of the Trades Unions, and the members themselves of these Trades Unions, are not strong enough to deal with them, then society itself, representing the majestic force of our historic civilisation, must collect all its strength and extirpate a most malignant growth from our system. Either they perish or we do.

*Another article by Lord Birkenhead will appear in the next number.*

## DIANA PASSES.

**Y**ES, everywhere, as with a hand  
 She wrote "ideal" on the sand,  
 And rising upward, fluttering,  
 My heart throbbed like a prisoned thing:  
 Footprints! footprints! glistening.

The day was calm: a tempest passed,  
 For all heads turned to shun the blast;  
 That is, they turned the way she went.  
 Her face's lily stem was bent,  
 And all like vagrant leaves were blown  
 Round her slight robe with violets sown—  
 And a little satin hat,  
 Moonlight in sunlight crowned all that.

Her eyes were laughing like a child,  
 Yet she was Diana wild,  
 Hart hunting, and the sacred fire  
 Burned where she smiled, disaster dire.

Simply she passed along the beach,  
 And simply made a slave of each,  
 For those that quickly turned away  
 Followed her with their thoughts all day.  
 So it was at Sables d'Oloune.  
 The day of miracles is done,  
 Sages tell us: see them run  
 Where Dian passes in the sun!

DOUGLAS AINSLIE.



"The girl took the tiller."

# THE UNKNOWN PASSENGER

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

WHEN James Strode came down from the mountains and looked upon the sea, he found it good. And after varying terms of servitude in the Ontario bush, on the prairies of the North-West, and amongst Rocky Mountain lumber camps, the Pacific Ocean is apt to be a refreshing sight.

At the moment he was holidaying in Vancouver on the proceeds of eighteen months' hard labour, and anyone who has been engaged in manual toil for that length of time, without a break, will know what a holiday means. It consists of occupying a room at the best hotel in the place, and lying in bed until noon each day, reflecting with relish that somewhere on the North American continent people are still tumbling out of their bunks at dawn—if not before—and wielding axe, lariat, or canthook, as the case may be, while *you* remain comatose between clean sheets or luxuriate in a real hot bath.

How long this blissful state of affairs would last in Strode's case depended

entirely on the physical condition of his bank roll, and bank rolls have a notoriously delicate constitution. At the end of a pleasant fortnight Strode's became sufficiently emaciated to make him think, and to think on holiday signifies the beginning of the end.

He had no desire to retrace his steps Eastward; North, for reasons not unconnected with an already frozen foot, attracted him not at all; and South spelt California, unequalled as a resort, but as a field for white manual labour not exactly promising. There seemed nothing for it, then, but to continue the motion Westward, and to do that meant passage by mail boat or a header from the American continent into Puget Sound.

After an alternate examination of the sea and his financial resources, Strode returned to the town and interviewed a sleek young man across the equally sleek counter of a shipping office.

"Honolulu's *your* medicine," this gentleman advised. "Read those!"

Strode found himself inundated by a young library of illustrated literature dealing with the Hawaiian Islands, and proceeded to digest as much of it as was possible at one sitting.

It appeared that the group consisted for the most part of mammoth hotels, people poised on surf-boards, and native orchestras wreathed in flowers. It all looked very nice, as nice as the Great American Advertisement, that can cause the mouth to water over tinned beans, could make it. But as a penurious world-wanderer, what Strode wanted to know was how much it cost to reach this delectable spot, and what one did for a living when there, and on neither of these prosaic subjects was there a word of information.

The sleek young man promptly supplied it. Fares ranged in dollars from So-and-so to Such-and-such—neither of which Strode could afford—and when there he would find himself in "The Premier Playground of the Pacific."

The thing looked pretty hopeless.

"How about working my way as a steward?" he suggested as a last resort. But the sleek young man was very properly uninterested in stewards, and said so, before turning abruptly to more promising clients.

For a few moments Strode stood watching money pass over the counter in exchange for transportation. It was a fascinating and enviable sight. To Strode it seemed that each printed slip was a magic carpet wafting its owner where he willed, and when a packet of labels bearing the bold inscription "CABIN — HONOLULU" was handed to an expensive-looking lady at his elbow, he could have wept from sheer covetousness. Here evidently was someone bound for "The Premier Playground of the Pacific." Well, he hoped she would enjoy it. In the meantime he had better be thinking about a job.

He had stopped mechanically before a blackboard outside an employment agency, and was regarding the now familiar list of human requirements blazoned on it in chalk, when he became aware that someone was watching him from the other side of the street. It was the lady of the shipping office.

Now, Strode was not the sort of person to imagine that strange ladies could be interested in him for the sake of his blue eyes or anything like that, and when she deliberately crossed the road and addressed him, his surprise was genuine.

"Excuse me," she said, "but could you direct me to the Craven Hotel?"

"Certainly," said Strode. "You take the second on the left the way you were going, and the hotel's on the first corner to the right."

A hint of puzzlement came into the girl's face. "Thank you," she said. "But how did you know *which* way I was going, considering your back was turned?"

"By your reflection in the window," Strode explained.

"Then you saw me—accost you?"

"If you care to put it like that."

"I do," said the girl with quiet deliberation, "because that's exactly what I did."

"If I can be any manner of use——," Strode began.

"We'll cut out the introductory stuff, if you don't mind," said the girl crisply. "You can be of use, or I shouldn't have taken such a liberty. You're looking for work, aren't you?"

Strode admitted the fact.

"And, by your actions in the shipping office, you want to get to Honolulu."

"Badly."

"Well, I can satisfy you in both respects, if you care to undertake what I have to offer."

"Short of murder, I'm prepared for anything," Strode assured her.

"English, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"And a stranger in these parts?"

"I don't know a soul in Vancouver."

The girl subjected him to a steady glance of appraisement. "Can you sail a boat?" was her next startling inquiry.

"It depends on the kind of boat and where you want her sailed," he answered guardedly.

"I'm glad you said that," exclaimed the girl, "because it shows that you can."

"I once owned a ten-tonner," Strode confessed, "and sailed her from Southampton to Vigo and back. I'm not sure that I handled her according to Leckey, but we got there."

"That's all I need to know for the present." The girl glanced quickly up and down the street. "There are reasons why we mustn't be seen together more than can be helped. What wages are you asking?"

"I've been getting three dollars a day," said Strode.

"I'm offering ten and a passage to Honolulu," snapped the girl.

"In that case," said Strode, "I'm yours."

The girl spoke rapidly and as though repeating a lesson: "You receive your passage money and a month's wages now. You go second class on the *Ottawa*, sailing the day after to-morrow. I go first on the same boat, but we are entire strangers from now until you receive further instructions. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," said Strode, and, as a roll of bills was thrust into his hand: "Aren't you taking rather a chance?"

"I don't think so," said the girl, and with a fleeting smile she was gone.

Speculation is of small worth at any time, and in this particular instance Strode decided that it was useless. He had received on trust what seemed to him a stupendous sum of money and certain orders that he was determined to carry out. He could do no less.

In due course the *Ottawa* sailed, and Strode with her, but he saw nothing of his employer until three days out, and then only a glimpse of a neat white frock, a wide-brimmed straw hat, and a pair of dark eyes beneath it that met his own across the rail separating the first and second class without a flicker of recognition.

It was a pleasant voyage. As day succeeded day, Strode revelled in the subtle changes that heralded the tropics. The impossible blue of the ocean, the shimmer of flying-fish in yellow sunlight, dolphins tumbling like marine clowns at the vessel's bows, sunsets of magic beauty, all conveyed to him a sense of unreality that stirred the soul. His only regret was that he had not set out on the tropic trail before.

It was not until a day before the scheduled landing at Honolulu that his employer gave any indication that she wished to communicate with him, and even then he was not sure about it. But she stood so long close to the barrier between the two classes, and stared so intently seaward, that Strode decided to find out. Taking up a position about a yard distant, he, too, appeared to be engrossed in the horizon. Without movement even of the lips, the girl spoke.

"I shall be staying at the Moana Hotel. Put up where you like. At noon on the fourteenth next, meet me as though by accident on one of the swimming floats off Wakiki beach."

"Right," said Strode with equal immobility.

She shivered, as though the chill of the

evening had caught her unawares, drew a wrap closer about her slim body, and moved away.

Two days later Strode proved to his own satisfaction that as regards Honolulu "The Great American Advertisement" had not lied. He took up residence at an hotel that actually transcended its own photograph in magnificence, tried, with indifferent success, to poise himself on a surf-board, and listened to a native orchestra wreathed in flowers. He would ask nothing more than to stay on Wakiki beach the rest of his life, he decided; and, lying in a bathing suit on the hot sand, his thoughts turned involuntarily towards ways and means of accomplishing such an ideal, until they were dispelled by the sudden realisation of how he came to be there. He was no longer foot-loose and fancy free. He was in pawn—to the unknown. Well, to-morrow at noon he would know the worst. In the meantime—He purged himself of all care by running down the beach and diving through a Pacific roller.

At the appointed time he found his employer swinging her legs from a raft moored off the beach. They were alone, but even then the girl insisted on Strode remaining in the water on the seaward side of the raft.

"So you've come," she said, looking down at him with her curiously penetrating gaze.

"What did you imagine I should do?" Strode demanded.

"I didn't imagine anything. I just waited to see."

"So did I," said Strode.

"It seems I've been lucky," mused the girl, staring seaward with a gravity that seldom left her. "You just do what you're told without wanting to know any more. Do you think you can keep it up?"

"Why not?" said Strode. "Most of us did that for five straight years not so very long ago."

The girl nodded understandingly. "Anyway, I've found out all that I wanted to," she went on. "If you can obey orders on Wakiki beach, you can obey them anywhere."

"I'm inclined to agree with you," said Strode.

The girl took an oiled-silk package from her bathing suit and consulted some written notes it contained.

"I want you," she said, slowly and distinctly, "to buy a boat—a thoroughly seaworthy yacht of about twenty tons, flush-

decked, and capable of being taken anywhere by three hands. Do you think a twenty-tonner big enough?"

"It's not a question of size," said Strode; "it's design and build."

"Well, that's what you're expected to find," continued the girl, again referring to her notes. "Then fit her out with everything necessary for making a passage, and provision her in the simplest possible way for three months."

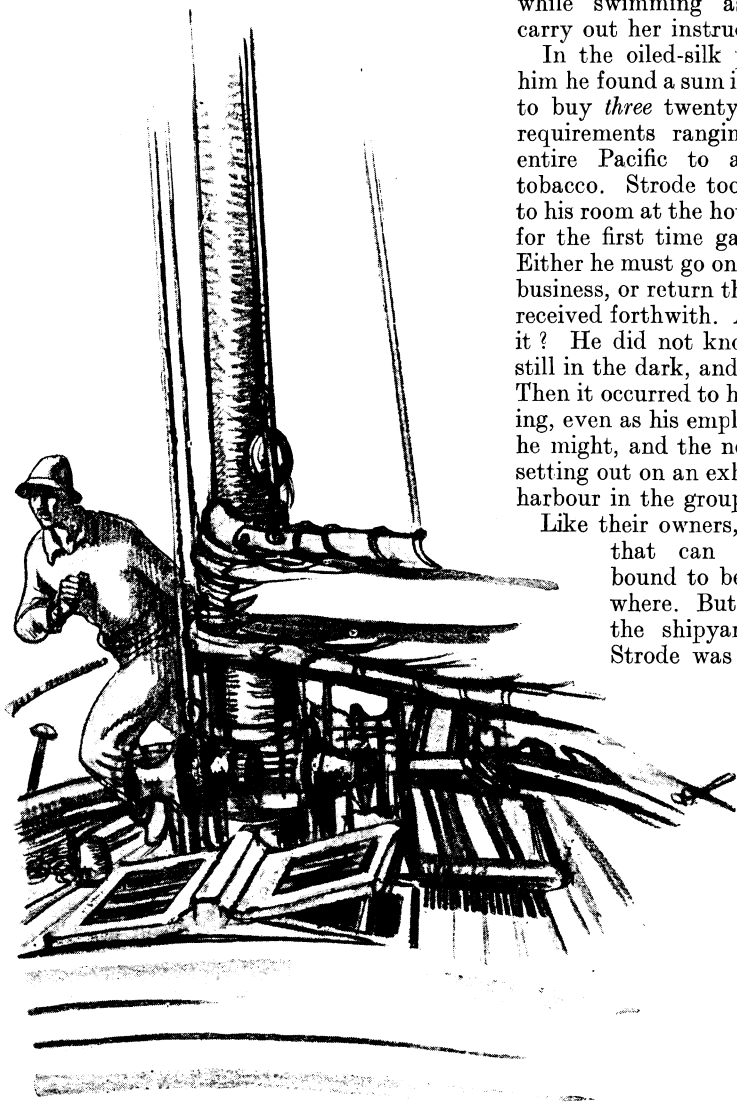
"And if I fail to find a suitable craft?" Strode suggested.

"Take the next best," ordered the girl between compressed lips. "A craft of some sort *has* to be found. And if you're asked any questions," she added, reading from her notes, "you're an eccentric English yachtsman bent

on cruising through the Hawaiian Islands single-handed."



"It was time enough for something to spring from the deck like a panther, and send man and weapon hurtling over the knee high rail."



The girl studied the blue dome of the sky. "I wonder if there's anything else," she mused. "Yes. If you want to see me at any time, swim out to this float and sit here. I shall recognise you through the glasses. Don't come, unless it's absolutely necessary, until the yacht's ready. Is that all?" Suddenly she looked tired, as though the strain of months was beginning to show through the adamant of her self-control. It was the first intimation Strode had received that she was anything more than an exceedingly efficient machine, and he experienced a sudden desire to comfort her. But what was there to be done? Nothing, he decided,

while swimming ashore, nothing except carry out her instructions.

In the oiled-silk package she had given him he found a sum in currency large enough to buy *three* twenty-tonners, and a list of requirements ranging from charts of the entire Pacific to a particular brand of tobacco. Strode took both list and money to his room at the hotel, locked the door, and for the first time gave way to speculation. Either he must go on with this extraordinary business, or return the young fortune he had received forthwith. And why *not* go on with it? He did not know, except that he was still in the dark, and darkness is uninviting. Then it occurred to him that he was weakening, even as his employer had imagined that he might, and the next morning found him setting out on an exhaustive search of every harbour in the group.

Like their owners, no craft is everything that can be desired. There is bound to be a compromise somewhere. But on the whole, and when the shipyard had done with her, Strode was passably satisfied with the auxiliary cutter that he found. The hull was sound and on seaworthy lines, and the accommodation practical if plain. By expending vast sums in overtime, he succeeded in getting rid of about half the money he had been allowed, and having the vessel ready for sea at the end of three weeks.

It was with pardonable pride that he kept his appointment

on the float, and sat there sunning himself. He had been so inundated with work of late that he had hardly given a thought to his employer, and when he saw her swimming towards him, and at last clinging to the hand-rope, he was struck by the change in her. The strain of waiting had left its mark.

"I'm ready," he told her.

The smile of relief that parted her lips was his reward, but when he made a movement to help her on to the float, she waved him back.

"You don't want to spoil it all, do you?" she demanded. "I've told you we can't be too careful."



"But surely now——"

"You don't know," she insisted. "Now is just the time when a single slip can undo all that has been done. We sail at dusk to-morrow," she added quietly.

Strode contrived not to show surprise, and, chancing to glance downward, caught a hint of appreciation in the girl's eyes.

"You must have made a good soldier," she told him.

"As a matter of fact, I was an extraordinarily bad one," said Strode.

"Theirs not to reason why," she quoted.

"Please," he protested.

"Very well." Her voice hardened as she gave further instructions. Strode was to sail from the shipyard alone, heave to in open water beyond Diamond Head at eight o'clock the following evening, and await events.

"I hope I haven't given the impression that I'm a deep-sea navigator," he suggested, "because I'm not."

The girl stared at him in silence for a moment. "There's still time for you to back out if you want to," she said in a small, cold voice.

"I don't," Strode returned. "But I know my limitations, and thought I'd better let *you* know them."

"Have my instructions exceeded your limitations so far?"

"No."

"Well, then"—the girl turned with a hint of impatience—"I think you'd better be getting ashore."

"There's one other matter," said Strode, producing the oiled-silk package, "your change."

"For you," said his employer, as though tipping a waiter.

"Have you any idea how much it is?" he demanded.

"It doesn't matter—how much it is. Please take it—and go."

Strode obeyed on the instant by taking a header from the float and swimming shoreward. He had no wish to witness the collapse that was evidently imminent, and which he could do nothing to avert.

Events thenceforth took on the curiously abstract quality of a dream. It seemed to Strode that he was outside them, an automaton, accepting each unusual happening without consideration of cause or effect. He was aware that he slipped out of harbour on the auxiliary, and hove to under mainsail and jib; that his employer came alongside in a native dug-out, clambered aboard, and

gave instructions for the canoe to be sunk till awash and set adrift; and that they sailed into the star-pricked night.

The girl took the tiller, and it was soon evident that she knew what she was about. Strode caught a momentary glimpse of the compass, and her face, tense and eager, staring into the lighted binnacle, before a curt order to set the topsail sent him for'ard. After that he was ordered below, and had no notion how long he lay on the fo'castle bunk, because down there in the darkness, with the musical ripple of water slipping past the vessel's side, the accumulated weariness of the past weeks overcame him.

When he awoke, and thrust head and shoulders through the fo'castle hatch, they had made land—land that towered above them in mighty cliffs of volcanic rock, blotting out the stars. This they skirted by means of fitful breaths from the shore, until the girl called him aft to point out a red light low down on a distant beach.

She was trembling visibly as she gave instructions, and, still carrying them out with the precision of machinery, Strode rowed shoreward in the dinghy and rested on his oars outside the surf. The light vanished, and presently the dripping figure of a man clambered over the gunwale sank breathless on to a thwart, and motioned him toward the cutter.

It was afterwards, alone in the fo'castle, where he had been sent the instant the unknown passenger had set foot aboard, that Strode allowed himself to recall details, and then it was the meeting of these two that leapt to his mind—not a word, not a look; a tall, grey-bearded man, in dripping ducks, seizing the tiller like one possessed, getting under way, and heading for the open sea under every stitch of canvas the cutter would carry; the girl, crouched in the cockpit, mute and motionless.

Whatever course had been set, a stiff following breeze held for two days and two nights, and during that time the man never left the tiller, nor Strode the fo'castle. Occasionally the girl came below and helped him to prepare food, but she seldom spoke. She was haggard from lack of sleep, yet her eyes shone with the brilliance of a consuming purpose.

"At midnight you'll relieve me at the tiller," she told him. "The course is south by east. Sail as near it as you can, that's all."

And at midnight Strode carried out his orders. The wind was fair, and the cutter

sailed like a witch. He surrendered himself to the sensuous enjoyment of feeling life and movement under his hand. South by east. . . . Where would that land them? He did not know. He did not particularly care. He was sailing full and by for the unknown.

It was after five weeks of weather fair and foul that land loomed on the southern horizon, and at the end of that time Strode knew no more about his shipmates than he had known at the beginning. For one thing, he had constantly reminded himself that it was none of his business; for another, his world had consisted of the fo'castle and the deck. Bulkhead doors had remained locked throughout the voyage. The man was a navigator—there could be no doubt of that from the way he handled the sextant, if nothing else, and his short, pithy orders in time of stress. And now he had made a bow-on landfall after a five weeks' passage in a cockleshell.

They came to anchor in a land-locked harbour of surpassing beauty. The place was an island, a deserted fragment of verdure-clad volcanic rock on the far-flung outskirts of a group. The anchor had no sooner taken hold than the dinghy was in commission, taking ashore load on load of camp equipment until the cutter was practically gutted.

By nightfall the task was completed, the dinghy lay alongside ready to take its unknown passengers ashore, and Strode was sitting on the for'ard hatch-combing with a pipe in full blast, when voices came to him through the saloon skylight. They were a mere jumble of sound, but rose and fell as though in altercation before ceasing abruptly. A moment later the man's head and shoulders appeared above the sliding hatch aft, and his towering form, clearly silhouetted against the stars, stepped from the cockpit and approached along the deck. A few yards distant he stopped in his tracks, braced himself against the port shrouds, and raised an arm.

It was not the first time Strode had looked into the muzzle of a levelled revolver, but never had he seen anything as coldly deliberate. The rest was nothing less than a cataclysm of happenings. How long the revolver remained levelled between his eyes, Strode had no notion—probably not more than a couple of seconds—but it was time enough for something to spring from the deck like a panther, and send man and weapon hurtling over the knee-high rail.

"Engine!" snapped the girl, and ever as Strode yanked at the fly-wheel, a rumble of chain told that the cable had been slipped.

When he went on deck, the girl was at the tiller, staring out over their wake to where a fan of ripples on the glassy surface of the harbour marked a swimmer heading shoreward. Such was Strode's last glimpse of the unknown passenger.

The girl did not speak until the cutter slowed down on an easy swell in the harbour mouth.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly.

"Don't mention it," said Strode. "What next?"

She smiled faintly. "That's all, and thank you."

"I ought to thank *you*," Strode objected.

"What for?"

"Saving my life."

The girl looked up at him with her grave, direct gaze. "I shouldn't have done it unless I'd been sure of you," she said. "My father was not."

"You'd have let me be shot in cold blood?"

"Yes—if I hadn't been sure of you," she repeated meaningly.

"You're taking another chance."

"Oh, I don't know——" Her eyes fell to the glint of metal in her right hand.

"You mean," said Strode, "that if your trust in me happens to be misplaced, you'll finish off the job yourself?"

The girl nodded.

"I have only one other order to give you," she said. "Surely you can carry it out as you have the others."

"Perhaps," said Strode, "when you've given it."

"From now on you are the English yachtsman who sailed from Honolulu single-handed. The whim seized you to make a passage to the South Pacific, and you made it—*alone*."

"I see," said Strode.

"You will never return to this island, nor tell a living soul that anyone is here. And you swear to carry out these instructions."

"I swear," said Strode, "and not on account of that plaything in your hand, either."

A sudden glint came into the girl's eyes, and was gone.

"I know," she said, and, turning with a hint of weariness, climbed down into the dinghy.

"What about the boat?" Strode asked her, as the oars slipped into the rowlocks.

"The boat is yours," she said, and rowed off into the darkness.

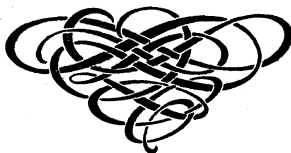
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Long before Strode made port at the main island of the group, he had solved the riddle of the unknown passenger.

There were charts below, and now that his mind was free to conjure with memories, he recalled how the compass had read from

his glimpse of it on that night of their departure from Honolulu. And the wind had been fair. There had been no need to alter the course for the island of the lighted beach.

With the parallel rulers Strode projected a line that cut clean through Molokai. Molokai? He turned the pages of the North Pacific Directory, read a paragraph, and sat quite still, staring before him. Molokai was the island of the lepers.



## SUMMER LAUGHS.

**S**UMMER laughs in lanes and hedges,  
Dances in the reeds and sedges,  
Flirts her flowered skirts afloat  
By the forest's leafy coat,  
Wreaths a crown of poppies red  
For her gay triumphant head.

See her, fair and young and trilling,  
Golden sun about her spilling;  
Watch her, curved about in sleep  
On the haycock's fragrant heap;  
In cool caverns of green shade  
Seek the peaceful, dreaming maid.

Summer's cup is brimming over,  
Brimming to the full with clover,  
Sweet of roses, foam of may,  
Meadows ripening into hay;  
Moon-eyed daisies tall therein,  
Hillsides all ablaze with whin.

Larkspur, foxglove lift their spires  
Over apple-scented briars;  
Pansies, pinks, and gillyflowers  
Throw sweet kisses to the hours;  
Bees on honey-quest go roaming,  
Lovers linger in the gloaming.  
Summer laughs, and laughing spills  
Joy across the fields and hills!

LETITIA WITHALL.



"She listened while he explained in detail that Evelyn admired their house so—she wanted her drawing-room on similar lines. 'Not just like ours, for Heaven's sake!' said Joyce, exasperated. He became explanatory. 'It couldn't be, of course. But she's got to get these silly Futurist ideas out of her head.'"

# THE CHINESE CARPET

By MURIEL HARRIS

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

**T**HERE must have been something about the carpet. Joyce Filltree and her husband very nearly bought it, in spite of the new house and a preposterous overdraft at the bank. Evelyn Rellick wanted it the moment she saw it. John Rayer, importer of Oriental goods, had bought it against the advice of his partner and in spite of a private life based upon everything solid and unromantic.

John had picked it up among a lot of rubbish in an unsavoury neighbourhood near the docks. Some things are borne in upon one. It was dirty; it had a number of red stains in the middle which might be red ink, might be wine; there was a piece missing in one corner which would have to be replaced over here, and one knows what that means. To crown it all, the Chinaman who sold it demanded a stiff price. This was

a carpet, he declared, which the Chinese made for themselves, not for export. As he said it he contrived to convey the suspicion of an insult. John Rayer was only thankful he had not asked more, because he knew he would have paid it, and in the present state of trade one had to get one's money back. So at least said the business man John. The other John—that didn't live at Surbiton, and didn't have blinds all drawn to exactly the same level in front of the house—said that he must have the carpet anyhow, and, still more, that he wouldn't sell it to any but exactly the right people.

The patch showed, of course, although it had been fairly well done. So did the red stains, though they had been toned down a good deal by judicious treatment. John did not think they really took away from the value of the carpet. Rather, they seemed

to throw up the blue border and the blue flowers scattered sparsely upon the buff ground. They brought out a gleam in the buff that was almost golden, lent the blue a deeper tone. It wouldn't suit Surbiton. It couldn't stay for ever in the long, dusty warehouse, with its aromatic smell and its long beams of light criss-crossing to strike the silks and china and jades lying about in brilliant patches upon the shelves and tables. There was someone it would suit, someone in whom John could enjoy it by proxy. He didn't listen to his brother's grumbings at his venture, but put the carpet at the bottom of a heap of rugs, until a customer should come along who should somehow prove his claims to buy it. For, after all, one has to get one's money back. So John salved his conscience as he stowed the carpet away.

He knew at once that Joyce and Edgar were the people he was waiting for. They had come to make a trifling purchase. He had known Edgar Filltree for some years, so he showed them the carpet. That was two years ago. They both exclaimed when they saw it. It was exactly what they wanted. It would make the new house. If only they had seen it earlier, before they had spent so much money on buying other things which were exactly what they wanted! They admired the blue ground, the delicacy of the stray flowers scattered lightly on the buff, the depth of tone, and, hearing the price, were both convinced that to buy it was impossible.

John might have lowered his price, but he was a fatalist where the carpet was concerned. It had to justify his opinion of it. It could wait. Also he wasn't so very sorry not to part with it—just yet, at all events. The girl had almost echoed his own opinion. She said that the red stains, if anything, enhanced the colour. Well, the carpet would go where it would go.

The Filltrees left the warehouse determined to buy the carpet later on if it were still there.

"I'm not sure we haven't made a mistake," said Joyce. "There are some things one can't afford to miss."

"He won't sell that in a hurry," said Edgar. "I don't want to kill off a relation, but I wish a legacy would drop in."

It had been fun furnishing. The Filltrees had spread it over the first two years of their married life, and they had not finished yet. They determined from the first to buy things as they found them, and their first dinner-

parties were given on what Joyce called orange-boxes. The orange-boxes gave way gradually to treasures, picked up in out-of-the-way corners. Joyce thought Edgar's taste perfect and his knowledge unrivalled. Edgar enjoyed his wife's admiration mightily, though he felt that he did know a good deal about old furniture. Joyce was twenty-three and Edgar six years older, and they both felt very modern, very well-balanced and highly original persons. That their house in Chelsea, with its panelled drawing-room, turned out, after all their efforts, to be like a good many other houses with eighteenth-century tendencies, did not worry them in the least, for when you have set to work in a manner entirely different from that of other people—well, then, your house can't possibly be really the same as theirs. Besides, Edgar petted Joyce and Joyce admired Edgar, so what on earth was there to grumble at?

Afterwards Joyce dated "things," as she called them, from the day on which they had found themselves unable to buy the Chinese carpet. Previously she put it down to the shooting-party. It did not begin with that detestable Miss Rellick. It began with Joyce herself, though how on earth was she to know? She had never been to a shooting-party before, and it was a revelation to her to hear men brag—grown men—and tell tall stories about their shots, when you had seen with your own eyes what really happened. And they must have seen it, too, and yet in the evening they told marvellous stories about non-existent birds, and when you added up the total of the birds that each man claimed, it far exceeded anything that the keepers had finally laid out on the grass in front of the house. It amused her at first. And she thought how amusing it would be later to make fun of it all with Edgar. But it hadn't amused Edgar at all, and she realised that some of his own stories were perhaps on the borderline—Edgar, who was a lawyer, and precise, and who dabbled in chemistry and accuracy. He said something about shooting-men being "good fellows," murmured something about women and shooting-parties. And he talked a great deal to Evelyn Rellick the next evening, and she asked him questions about the woodcock he had shot, and he actually gave her the pinion feather. It was true Joyce had said she thought shooting was cruel. And Evelyn had said she was sure that a bird claimed by one Dr. Baines was really Edgar's. Joyce had thought so,

too, but something determined her not to say so. Evelyn also thought that shooting-men were "good fellows." She said so when Edgar gave her a jay's wing the following day. Joyce realised for the first time that when a man was a "good fellow" it became automatically unwise for a wife to see him in any light but that of the rosiest flattery. She determined that she at least wouldn't flatter anyone, meaning Edgar. And Edgar seemed also to have made a resolution that in future he wouldn't pet anyone.

It was Mrs. Cross who made the chance remark about Evelyn Rellick when she came to tea with Joyce one afternoon. "Evelyn Rellick," she said, "has an innate sympathy with all husbands."

Joyce put down her pink lustre-cup—she and Edgar had picked it up in Battersea—a little more suddenly than it deserved. Mrs. Cross had suddenly crystallised a vague discomfort she had felt for some time. Edgar had talked a good deal about Miss Rellick after the shooting-party, said it was so nice to find a woman who *hadn't* cut her hair and could sit still—meaning a woman who could listen to him while he talked, thought Joyce, whose eyes had suddenly opened wide. Then he ceased to talk altogether, except once, when he said he wished Joyce would make friends with Miss Rellick. "I think she thinks you don't like her," he said unwisely.

Once she had loomed up upon the horizon, Joyce was to hear nothing but news of Miss Rellick. It was quite true, it seemed, about the husbands, and everybody who had a husband joined in the condemnation of Miss Rellick's practices. One woman declared that Miss Rellick always asked the particular husband his advice about the rearrangement of her big drawing-room, and according as the husband was Cubist, Futurist, Chippendale, Chinese or merely modern, so the big drawing-room became for the time being.

"What is it now?" said Joyce, who hadn't called, and then wished she had left the question unasked.

"Transition stage," was the answer. "The blue ceiling has gone, to begin with."

There was a certain amount of truth in the gossip concerning Miss Rellick. She did feel quite truly that husbands were to be pitied, and she sometimes said gently that men needed to be taken care of—that Celia Dill was so unwise with her husband; that Maud Jeune left her husband much too much

alone; that men were only big babies, but that in the things that really mattered—And she rather looked the part, too. She looked younger than she was, and she had a way of sitting perfectly still and listening, and then of raising her eyes as though she found the speaker entirely absorbing. She wore her hair long and coiled, and often said of make-up that she didn't go in for that sort of thing, "meaning," said Mrs. Cross spitefully, "that she, at any rate, doesn't need it." Also she always let people help her. Joyce, whose hair was cut in an up-to-date fashion, was also exceedingly energetic. Edgar used to laugh at her about her energy—in the days, that is to say, when he petted her.

He hadn't said anything for some time about her calling on Miss Rellick. She said in an off-hand manner that people didn't call nowadays—they would meet some time. But Evelyn was persistent. She liked, she said, to have married friends, husband and wife together, and she tried strenuously to induce Joyce to come and see her "and have a chat all by ourselves." Later she kept Joyce informed about her drawing-room, telephoning from time to time to ask Mrs. Filltree to ask her husband whether he didn't think a touch of cream in the paint wouldn't be better than dead white. "What do *you* think?" she asked Joyce. "I know what good taste you have."

"I haven't thought about it," Joyce answered without any attempt to soften her words.

If Mrs. Cross had not made her unfortunate remark about husbands, Joyce might have seen that, if Edgar had altered, perhaps she had altered, too. It was quite clear that she didn't admire him any more, and Edgar needed admiration. He liked airing his views, which were many, and then he liked quite naively to feel that they were admired. And Joyce had always admired them—until the fatal shooting-party, or perhaps until the time when they didn't buy the carpet. And it was difficult to be quite the same to a person suddenly grown critical and questioning. He often wondered what she was thinking, wondered whether he had done anything, what it could be, and then he went off to Evelyn Rellick, who made him feel the great, wonderful, masterful creature he knew in his heart that he wasn't.

When Mrs. Cross had gone, Joyce went up to her little sitting-room, her hands and face feeling stiff with indignation.

"Jealousy," she said, "just common jealousy!" And she and Edgar had agreed in the usual fashion to leave each other perfectly free if they ever ceased to love each other. Joyce could do stupid things, but she did not usually do them twice. This was different. From a feeling of discomfort she experienced a cold chill at the thought that perhaps Edgar might really have ceased to care for her. Of course it couldn't be really so, but, all the same, even if she didn't admire Edgar in the old way, there was still ever so much that she did admire, only she wouldn't say so. Besides, he was part of herself. That was the long and the short of it. What *did* women do when their husbands didn't love them any more? That wasn't the case with Edgar and herself, but what did they do? They cried first and foremost. Well, thank goodness, she hadn't cried. Miss Rellick was the sort of woman who cried. She didn't know it, but she felt sure. She thought of all the remedies in books for the recapture of errant husbands. Suppose she had long hair, like Miss Rellick's. Indeed, no—a thousand times no! She might pretend to Edgar that she was quite indifferent to him. But she wasn't, and, besides, it wouldn't work. She might make her own plans regardless of him. But she hadn't any plans regardless of him. Another man? There was nobody she liked enough for the rôle. Invite Miss Rellick to the house so often that Edgar grew sick of her? But perhaps he would only like her the more. She decided rather dispiritedly to try making her own plans, and, as a beginning, she told Edgar that night that she was going to the theatre, without adding any details.

"Whom are you going with?" said Edgar automatically, and, without waiting for an answer, said casually: "Then I think I'll go round to Evelyn Rellick's," which was vengeance with a vengeance.

Evelyn Rellick was not in the least like the traditional villainess. She had a rather gentle face and soft eyes, and looked as though she ought always to curl up on silken cushions. She belonged to the generation that ought to have married during the War. That she had a will of iron beneath her soft exterior did not necessarily appear. Most men thought her friendless, in spite of her comfortable house and her obvious means of doing what she liked. It was her friendlessness which appealed to them—it is pleasant to feel that you are a person's only solace. Now and again they found themselves employed on some errand which

ordinarily it would never have occurred to them to do. They meekly carried her parcels, than which nothing more can be said of any Englishman. They made up her fires for her, rang bells, got taxis. Mrs. Cross said she was a liberal education for husbands—except that they did not always profit by it in their homes. In return she listened to them for hours, only putting in a monosyllable now and again, fed them exceedingly well, made them feel intellectual, sporting, business-like, according to the particular case, and looked as though she really believed all the retorts they alleged they had made to other men. At the moment she was taking Edgar's advice about her drawing-room.

Edgar said the shape of the room was clearly eighteenth century—he saw everything in terms of the eighteenth century for the moment. It must have panelling and decorations, with a suggestion of old John Company—shawls, china—you know the kind of thing. "You might have a black buttons to give atmosphere," he suggested.

"And a parrot?"

"Yes, if it doesn't interrupt the conversation. You must have some lacquer and perhaps some feather pictures—don't be too pedantic about the period—and an ancestor in that alcove. Just the very thing for the old gentleman in the dining-room."

"Shouldn't it be a woman?"

"If you've got one. Yes, in Romney blue and white, and then match up the carpet to the picture. Look here, I know a jolly old warehouse in the City—you'll like it—they have Chinese rugs—diit cheap, too." He enjoyed expatiating on Chinese rugs, having a certain familiarity with the matter which sounded erudite to the uninitiated.

Evelyn was so manifestly pleased that it was only natural to invite her to lunch, although to-morrow was a busy day at the office. "We'll go to Holder's. Best beef-steak pie in London. It's close to the warehouse."

So pleased was he with himself that when he got home he was unusually affectionate to Joyce. She listened while he explained in detail that Evelyn admired their house so—she wanted her drawing-room on similar lines.

"Not just like ours, for Heaven's sake!" said Joyce, exasperated.

He became explanatory. "It couldn't be, of course. But she's got to get these silly Futurist ideas out of her head."

"Why?" said Joyce coldly.

He looked hurt. Joyce might have been more appreciative. "She asked for you," he said lamely, and did not tell her about the projected lunch. "I said you had gone to the theatre."

"Well, I didn't."

"Why?"

"No fun going alone."

"But I thought you were going with somebody."

"You didn't ask about it."

"You should have told me. I say, Joyce—nothing wrong, is there?"

"No, dear old thing. I was only cross."

He looked at her puzzled.

Joyce felt repentant. "I wish we hadn't finished *our* house," she said suddenly. "It was all such fun! I wonder whether that carpet's still there!"

"A beauty, wasn't it? I'm afraid it'll be gone now. I wish we'd bought it."

"So do I. Wasn't it jolly, the day we went there?"

"Oh, yes," said Edgar without enthusiasm. He wished he had spoken about the lunch. He worried for five minutes about it and then fell asleep.

Edgar's worries were not sufficient to prevent him from enjoying his lunch with Evelyn very much indeed. She approved of Holder's with a nice discrimination which was flattering to the promoter of the entertainment. When they emerged from the little eating-house, they found themselves in the busy hum of the City, with little churches looking like chessmen, and scarlet 'buses looming up and waning again. Edgar led her past Bishopsgate, down a little side street and into a doorway so dusty that it looked as though no one had entered it for years.

John Rayer greeted Edgar warmly, though he hadn't seen him for two years. The lady—surely he had thought of her as a good deal younger than Evelyn? No, he wasn't sure. In any case, Edgar and she wanted Chinese rugs. Did Mr. Filltree remember a carpet he showed him two years ago?

"Yes," put in Edgar hurriedly. "But that wasn't the kind of thing we wanted. Just rugs."

"Oh, do let us see it," said Evelyn, who, he suddenly recognised, had an uncanny knack of insisting unexpectedly.

"This one was—it had a patch in it," said Edgar, "and it was stained, too."

John Rayer looked surprised. He was about to expatiate on the merits of the

carpet. Then he gleaned that Edgar did not want it produced.

"You make me curious," said Evelyn. "Please let us see it." She turned to John Rayer.

Edgar had a curious sensation of the steel glove. He felt set down. He was still more upset when she decided on the spot that she must have it. She made nearly the same remark as Joyce about the wine stains enhancing its colour. "It's a most beautiful thing," she said to Edgar. "Why did you think I shouldn't like it?"

He could think of nothing better to say than: "Of course it isn't at all the right thing for the room."

"Oh, but it is. Don't you see, it's exactly the thing."

Edgar swore under his breath. He was casting about for some further reason against the carpet—that he had thought, for instance, of buying it himself.

"Would you mind settling for it?" said Evelyn. "I haven't my cheque-book. Perhaps your reference will be enough. And then," she added to John Rayer, "could you send it to-day—at once? Well, then, early to-morrow morning. I simply can't wait for it."

Edgar had more and more the sensation of being as wax in her hands. Evelyn glanced at him. "I know I am keeping you from your office," she said, with a return to her old manner. "It's been most awfully good of you— Then to-morrow morning without fail," she said once more to Rayer.

John Rayer had done a good stroke of business, though, of course, the carpet had been lying idle for two years. It would amuse him to tell his brother he had sold the carpet. He did not, however, experience quite the satisfaction he expected. Mr. Filltree didn't really mean to buy that carpet. That was clear enough. Well, business was business. Yet the Chinese carpet ought not to go where it did not fit, and it fitted into a calm, harmonious atmosphere. "It's a noble piece of work," John said to himself, and saw, from the surprised face of one of the warehousemen, that he had spoken aloud. Embarrassed, he gave orders for the sending of the carpet, and began to talk of a new consignment of rugs which had come in that day.

It is impossible to say that John Rayer did it on purpose. It is impossible to know that he didn't do it on purpose. He may have made a genuine mistake, being a



business man, as his brother said, only in patches. Perhaps the packer made the mistake, though he swore that he sent the carpet to the address given him by John.

Suffice it that it turned up the next morning early at the Filltrees' house in

Chelsea just five minutes after Edgar had left to go to his office.

It was lucky that Joyce had the whole day to herself in which to make up her mind about the situation. She thought afterwards that the whole of their future happiness depended upon Edgar's having left the house five minutes before the carpet arrived.

At least, that was before she began to believe that the carpet itself had special properties. Probably that blue border really meant something. It was an exciting morning. There was her joy on receiving it—the sort of joy you have after a great event such as getting engaged, being promoted, being left a fortune. Edgar had kept it all so secret just to give her this jolly surprise. What an idiot she had been about Evelyn Rellick! She



"Joyce felt mischievous. 'I heard you say something about carpets,' she said. 'Is she having one, too?' 'There isn't another one.' His tone suggested 'As you ought to know.'"

called up a reluctant maid, and then and there took up all the rugs and put down the carpet. "All stained and patched, it was," the maid explained afterwards to her collaborator, "and such a price, too, when you might have had a new one for a quarter of the money!"

Then the telephone bell rang.

When Joyce returned to the drawing-room, it was as though she had suddenly come unstarched. She told the maid that she would finish putting the room to rights herself, just as that damsel was getting interested and had lost every desire to go back and finish the dining-room. She sat down among the displaced furniture, feeling rather sick.

When Evelyn Rellick began about the carpet that hadn't come—yes, beautiful old Chinese—Joyce broke into her explanations, saying that she knew nothing at all about it. Yes, Edgar had gone to the office as usual. "I'm sorry, but I'm awfully busy this morning," she said.

"What are you so busy about?"

Joyce almost saw Evelyn's patronising smile at the other end of the telephone. "The washing," she said drily. "Good-bye."

Upstairs she squeezed her hands tightly together and found herself making

silly little futile gestures. Their carpet—hers and Edgar's! And he had let that woman buy it! This was the end.



"Joyce was silent for a moment. 'Poor Miss Rellick! Dear—you see, I've got you—are you sure you wouldn't like her to have this? I don't mind, if you would.'"

The worst of ends is that while it is satisfactory to say something definite, you are always hoping that it isn't really the end, after all. In punishing the other person by a decision he has thoroughly deserved, you are often punishing yourself a great deal more, which, when you come to think of it, is very silly indeed. Joyce stopped making gestures. She couldn't quite stop the sore pain inside her. If Evelyn Rellick hadn't chanced to ring her up, she would never have known about the carpet, would have assumed that it was for her, and would have thanked Edgar and been frightfully nice to him, and what might not have happened then? Why shouldn't she still take it for granted? He had always meant her to have it. "No, I can't pretend," said Joyce. "But you've been pretending very successfully that he doesn't love you," said another Joyce. "And you've been pretending that you don't admire him." "That's for his good," said the first Joyce. Then, setting aside her high moral tone, she set to work to finish putting down the carpet.

Edgar played the tired-man-coming-home-from-work that evening. Evelyn had rung him up at the office. She said, incidentally, that she had rung him up at his house. Heaven knew what she had said! John Rayer was certain that the carpet had been sent. The woman was a nuisance. He didn't go to see Evelyn so that she should make trouble for him. A woman should be restful to a man. That was her great point—to be restful to tired-men-coming-home-from-work, not to disturb them at their offices. He hadn't wanted her to have the carpet. She might have seen that. What had she said to Joyce?

It was all the more astonishing to find a transformed Joyce—who hadn't engagements, or headaches, or criticism to offer him, but a true wife of his bosom, who, he felt with a rush, admired him every whit as much as ever. "I've got it down," said Joyce. "Do come and see it. Or are you too tired, old boy?"

It was very pleasant to be considered tired again, especially when feeling tired—as recognised by a young and clear-sighted young wife—meant that she was really fond of you. But what was "it"?

Edgar gasped when he saw the carpet.

"Isn't it perfect in this room?"

"Oh, very!"

If Joyce's spirits felt like lead, she did not show it at the moment. "You'll see it better after dinner," she said with new-born

tact, perhaps even with a shade of humour. The poor boy was really rather in a fix. Two ladies—one carpet. Edgar looked at her beseechingly once or twice, seemed about to say something, cleared his throat, and then relapsed in a silence which was half morose, half affectionate.

She gave him a chance to telephone after dinner. He took it, and she listened dishonourably to every word of the conversation, a proceeding which injured pride would certainly not have allowed in the morning.

She heard Edgar say he was sorry—hadn't known she wanted it so much. (Quite untrue, thought Joyce.) The truth was—here his voice died away—the truth was—no, he couldn't speak more distinctly—he had always meant that carpet for his wife. Yes, he ought to have explained at the time. Then a long pause, followed by an exceedingly frigid: "That is, of course, for you to say."

"That woman's always bothering me about something," he said, as he came up into the drawing-room and stood nobly on the hearth-rug surveying the carpet. "By Jove, it does look well!"

Joyce felt mischievous. "I heard you say something about carpets," she said. "Is she having one, too?"

"There isn't another one." His tone suggested "As you ought to know."

Joyce was silent for a moment. "Poor Miss Rellick! Dear—you see, I've got you—are you sure you wouldn't like her to have this? I don't mind, if you would."

"Have our carpet? No, I wouldn't." Edgar was positively outraged. "I thought you wanted it so much, Joyce."

"Of course I love it."

"And don't you remember that day in the warehouse, how we wanted this, and how we've waited for it? And I thought it would be such a surprise." Edgar was getting so much worked up that he almost believed that he had a grievance.

"Dearest, I don't want her to have it. It was only if you did."

"I've never wanted her to have it," said Edgar, which was true for once. "We've been going out too much," he said later. "What is the good of a jolly house of one's own if one is always going to other people?" And he read Joyce a lecture upon staying at home and modern tendencies which she didn't even laugh at—at least, not to show.

There was certainly something about that carpet. John Rayer felt it from the beginning, and there is no doubt that he was right.



“‘Well, sir, we thought, if you’d look over it this time——’”

# REASONING POWER

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

**M**OST things that you have rows about aren’t worth having rows over. I began to see that when I was a kid in the Lower Third. Carr and I had a scrap over a white rat. Just after we’d finished the second round, Tubby Bennet came along and proved that the beast didn’t belong to either of us, but to him, because there was a B inked on its tail.

This story isn’t about white rats. I’ve had to give them up, because I’m nearly fifteen and in the Upper Fourth. It’s about the upset with Wickings, the drill instructor last term, which made everybody see that rows and ragging are mugs’ games. Mind

you, it was a good bit his own fault. He’s one of those hefty Johnnies who’ve had their brains taken out in the Army and a book on regulations shoved inside their skulls instead. (It was Mellor, who’s Captain of the school and top of the Classical Sixth, who said that. I don’t profess to know about brains.) Wicky was all right at drilling the kids, and he wasn’t bad at gym, except that he wanted you to finish everything by bringing your heels together with a click. I’d like to know how you’re going to do it with your gym shoes! He always forgets that he isn’t in the Army. He was quite good at boxing really, frightfully smart when he began, though he

started by putting up his arms as if he was Mr. Punch posing for the cinema. And I will say he played a good game at cricket. He made forty-three and thirty-seven last summer for the village (he lived there) against the school. He was a decent chap in his bumptious way, because he never reported anyone.

"Bin a boy meself," he'd grunt, "and that's bein' a fool! Boys ain't got no reasonin' power."

He was always telling us that, and we got sick of it, and called him Reasoning Power. A chap must expect to get called things if he keeps saying them over and over like a parrot; so he had only himself to blame.

He got frightfully ratty when you called him Reasoning Power to his face. (You did it from a good way off, of course.) He got rattier when you said "Sergeant Reasoning Power." (You did that from a very long way off, because he could run.) He went right off the deep end when you said "Drill-Instructor Reasoning Power." (You only called that from round the door, or out of a window, or from behind a tree.)

The row was over "reasoning power." He was giving the boxing lesson to the Fourth, and Cockleshell Palmer started an argument with him about the way he told him to put up his hands. Palmer is very keen on boxing—his brother was amateur middle-weight champion—and he'd been reading a book that said nowadays pugilists didn't take up a stiff position, but started in a free attitude, and that the best defence was preparedness (I think that was the word) for attack. Wickings was ass enough to argue with him. (It gives a teacher away directly.)

"All rot!" he growled. "You've got to feel your way before you attack. There's many a chap who goes out to drop the other man one on the boko and catches a napper on his own."

"What's a boko?" Palmer asked. He looked as innocent as a baby—he can—but he's as sharp as a needle, and the best boxer in the Lower School—easily.

"Your smeller," Wickings said, "if you're too nice for slang. If you start swanky with your hands down, you may git rushed on to the ropes by a smart bloke before you git them up."

"What's a bloke?" said Palmer. He's the most aggravating beggar when he likes.

"I ain't here to teach you your alphabet," Wickings told him. "I wish I had you in

the Army. I'd learn you discipline, and not to give back-jaw to your betters, that I would! You've been reading out of that shilling book that's on the station stall. I know it. Nobody that has good tips is going to give them away at that price! If you're a Carpenter"—that's how he pronounces Carpentier—"any position's good enough, because you'll hit first. If you ain't—and you're half a class below him, Master Palmer"—he had old Cockleshell there—"you've got to test your 'ponent, and see who's quickest at getting his knock in, before you put your shirt on doing it. Defence has won many a scrap, and premmature attack lost it."

"You're a theorist," Palmer told him. (You can always get Wicky's rag out with words he doesn't understand.)

"You put it in English," Wicky roared, "and I'll report you! I'll have no low foreign words in this class."

We all laughed, and that made him wilder.

"Tell me it in English," he shouted, "or I'll go straight to Mr. Stead!" He's the Head. We call him Badger.

"Well, if I must," Palmer said, "it means a man who trusts too much to his reasoning power."

Of course Palmer went a bit too far then. He never knows where to stop, none of us being good enough to teach him. But Wickings altogether forgot himself; clouted Palmer in the ear and sent him rolling over and over. Mind you, it was only an open-handed clout, and I don't say that Palmer hadn't asked for it. Still, it wouldn't do to have that sort of thing. Badger would give a master the chuck for it, let alone a bally drill-instructor.

Palmer got on his feet in a sec, and put up his fists. He wouldn't take a hiding lying down from Jack Dempsey. He made a rush toward Wickings, but we held him, and told him that a chap couldn't fight with an instructor, especially when he hadn't "an earthly" against him. He was white with rage, and old Reasoning Power was as red as a beetroot.

"You'll be fired for this," Driscoll told him. (Driscoll's father is a judge, so he always lays down the law.)

"I take my gruel quiet when I've earned it," Reasoning Power said. "I don't say as I should have done it, but he laid out to draw me on, and knew what he was goading me into."

"Wickings," Palmer said through his

teeth, "some day, when I'm more your size and weight, I'll strike that blow back."

Wickings nodded; put on his coat. "The lesson's over," he said, and walked out.

"I'm the senior here," Driscoll said. "I suppose I've got to go and report it to Double-Barrel?" We call old Tait that, because he's Secretary and Deputy Head too. He's the favourite master in the school as well.

"No," Palmer said. "It's my affair. Now I've something to grow for . . . I wish you'd let me go for him."

"Don't be an idiot," I said. "You'd have been smashed. And it isn't only your affair; it's an insult to the Lower School. I shall call a meeting of the Round Table after tea to decide what's to be done."

We have a secret society of the Lower School, and we call it the Round Table. I am Knight-President. It is a serious society, and only deals with important things that affect the tone and customs of the school. It gave up piffle and tommyrot in 1891. The Minute Book (Vol. IV., No. 123) says: "Resolved that rites are antiquated and shall be abolished, but members shall be bound upon capital penalty to observe the laws as before." Father was President then, and signed the minute. He says that the iron was too hot by mistake when Knight Spencer was initiated, and there was a row about it. I don't take in all his yarns, but I think this is right, because Minute 126 says that Knight Spencer ii. is not to be called "Singey."

The meeting was awfully serious this time. I said that we had to deal with an attack upon the most important of the privileges of the Lower School; that a member of it (and therefore of the Round Table) could not be walloped by a master, except the Head or Deputy Head (that's old Double-Barrel), or by order of a prefect's meeting. This privilege had been invaded by a common drill-sergeant, who could not even speak correctly. It was up to the meeting to decide whether we should report the matter to the Head, or take it up ourselves, and, if the latter, how should we do it?

"If we report it," I said, "there's this to remember. Badger will sack Reasoning Power, but he'll make a fuss about Palmer ragging him."

"Palmer only pulled his leg," Fatty Brown said,

"Pulling a teacher's leg is ragging," I said. "It's the only way you can do it with most of them. If Cockleshell had done it to, say, Dinky, and got a clout in the ear—and he jolly well would have!—no one would have thought of reporting it. But a drill-sergeant! If Cockleshell wants us to report him, I shall vote for it."

"I don't want to report it," Palmer said. "If we do, he'll be booted, and I want him to stay here till I'm nearer his weight."

"What do you think?" I asked Bennet. He's Knight Vice-President.

"Tell him we'll report it if he doesn't apologise," he said.

"That only means a row that we'll have to report," I objected.

"I'm for showing him that the Lower School can keep a drill-sergeant in his place themselves," said Driscoll.

"That," I said, "is the question. *Can* we keep Reasoning Power in his place? Of course we can rag him now, and he'll be afraid to round on us for fear that the reason will come out; but once you begin ragging, there's a continual row. You know what old Double-Barrel said about Frenchy. 'Chaps who keep on playing nasty tricks become nasty chaps. If you behave badly in class, you aren't only lowering the master, but the school and yourselves.'" We don't pay much attention to masters' pi-jaw, but old Double-Barrel's a sport, and we believe in him.

"I don't mean in class," Palmer said, "but out of it; and I don't mean doing it over and over, but once for all."

"Doing what?" I asked.

"Say, lay wait for him, as he goes home, and duck him in the horse-pond," Palmer proposed.

"Rot!" I said. "He'd lay out one or two of us. That doesn't matter so much, but all the village would see, and it would come to old Badger's ears, and some of us would get expelled. Talk sense, Cockleshell."

"We don't want a public scrap with a drill-sergeant," Driscoll said. "It would lower the dignity of the Lower School; set the pre's on to us as well as the masters. But I don't see why we shouldn't make him run the gauntlet. My only doubt is between stones and rotten eggs. We'd catch him beautifully as he goes home through Wood Walk. My word!"

"Eggs would be best," Tiddler Smith said. He rubbed his hands. It set us all rubbing ours.

"You can't buy rotten eggs," I objected,



"We were in position at ten past four, and I drew up the forces very carefully."

"and fresh ones would cost too much. Stones aren't very good form. How about clay pellets—big ones?"

We decided upon clay pellets, as we could make plenty from mud dug out from the pond, and eggs for those who liked to provide them out of their own money (or what anyone would lend them). Everybody said he'd run to one egg, and several of us promised two, and Palmer four. We bought the French ones at a penny three-farthings. They are bad sometimes. This is what we put in the Minute Book:—

186. Resolved that Drill-Instructor

Wickings has insulted the Lower School in a manner which can be wiped out only in blood. He is therefore condemned to run the gauntlet. (Clay pellets, eggs, etc.) It is further voted that three shillings shall be advanced out of the funds of the Round Table to assist those who are short of cash to buy the necessary eggs, the same to be repaid as a debt of honour next Saturday.

In case posterity\* wants to know why, it is for:—

\* Posterity.—Ed.



(1) Clouting a Knight in boxing class for calling him Reasoning Power.

(2) Insulting the Lower School by saying that boys have none.

"This," I said, when I signed it, "will show him that we have."

"Let's make it our battle-cry," Bennet proposed, and that was carried.

It was also agreed that dead rats or mice came under *et cetera*. Unluckily, we hadn't any; but Todgy Tucker found a dead cat, and Bennet bought it for fourpence, because he was a better shot.

We decided to do it when Reasoning Power went home from the Sixth gym, at a quarter past four the next afternoon, and hurried off to Wood Walk directly school was over. I disposed our forces on the high side of the road. It's a straight cutting, and nearly ten feet up, and there are plenty of bushes to hide behind. We were to wait till I blew my whistle. (It's a silver one, and we say that it belonged to King Arthur, but father says it was a boatswain's.) When I whistled, everybody was to throw. When I blew

the second time, we were to run. Palmer wanted to stay and pitch him down, if he tried to climb up, but this was out-voted. Palmer is a bit mad; except for that, I expect they'd have elected him Knight-President instead of me, but we always go in for a sensible chap for president. I forgot to say that when we were starting to throw we were to shout "Reasoning Power!" for a battle-cry.

We were in position at ten past four, and I drew up the forces very carefully. I took the centre, of course. I had two eggs and six clay balls. I put Palmer on my right, because he had four eggs, and Bennet on my left, because he had the dead cat, and we called him the artillery. We were ready at four twelve; but when the quarter struck, Reasoning Power wasn't in sight, the sentries reported. We sent out scouts, but it was nearly half-past before they ran in and said he was on the way.

"Stand to your posts, knights," I ordered. "The Round Table expects that every knight this afternoon will do his duty. *Donsitabit!*"

That is our password. It always has been. Father says it is low Latin for "Rush on now and rest presently," but Uncle John



"'There's something the matter! What is it?' 'I'm fired,' he said."



says it is a corruption of "Don't sit down for a bit," because fellows didn't after the old initiation rite, when the new-fights\* (that's what they call the chaps who are initiated) were put through it.

"The enemy has entered the defile," a knight-scout reported.

"Prepare to give it to him in the neck," I ordered, and then Palmer grabbed me by the arm.

"There's a woman coming the other way," he said. "She'll be here about the same time."

"Why do women always get in the way?" I grumbled.

"She's only his wife," Nosey Jessop said. (He knows everyone and all about them.) "She's come to meet him."

"Even if we didn't hit her, we can't very well rag him before his old woman," I growled. "Wouldn't be cricket."

"Nobody said it would," Bennet grunted. "They'll meet almost exactly here. Hang it all!"

"We can do it to-morrow," I said.

"The cat won't keep," he snapped. "You smell it now. . . . Well, two of Sanders's rats seem dicky. They might be ready."

"Hold your fire, knights," I commanded, "and your row, too! He mustn't be warned what is in store for him. Get further behind the bush, Nosey. Here he is. He doesn't seem to be noticing much."

He wasn't. He didn't seem to notice the woman even, till she said "Bill!" Then he said "Hallo, Peg!" But he didn't look up.

"Bill," she squealed, "there's something the matter! What is it?"

"I'm fired," he said.

She screamed and grabbed at him. "Bill! Just at this time, with Bessie so queer, and needing the best of nourishment, the doctor says! What's it for?"

"Well, sit down, and I'll tell you." They sat down on the grass just below us. We couldn't see them, but we could hear. "I earned it," he said, "yesterday."

"And you never told me!"

"Thought it 'ud blow over. The fact is, one of my boys—well, I called 'em my boys—he's an aggravatin' little devil; worse tongue than a woman—he nagged me on, and I forgot myself."

"Bill, you never struck the lad? Oh, Bill! You've hurt him?"

"It was only a clout; open hand. Do

him good. . . . You needn't look. I know it was wrong as well as you do. In course it was wrong—*wrong*, if you make me say it. I could have cut my hand off directly I'd done it. He got up and was coming for me, the plucky little chap, and I swear I wasn't going to hit back, Peg; but they held him. Nice lad, if he has got a girl's tongue and rather a girl's face. Some day he'll make a champion boxer, that he will. I tell you, I *like* the boy!"

Palmer dropped an egg then. Luckily it fell on my foot, so it didn't make much noise, but it made my boot in a beastly mess.

"And he went and told on you?" the woman asked.

"Not him, or any of them. They wouldn't. I know young gentlemen when I deal with them. I ain't got one word to say against none of my lads, except that they're proper boys. I only hope the next man will do better by them than me. No, I didn't never tell on them, and they wouldn't on me. Going to return that blow when he's big enough, Master Palmer says. Aye, and he will! God bless him! All of 'em!"

"Be careful with those eggs, Palmer," I whispered.

"You've smashed up one in *your* pocket," Driscoll whispered. "It's leaking through. Look what *you're* doing!"

"I can't stand this stinking cat," Bennet muttered, and dropped it quietly in a bush behind, and I noticed that several of the chaps were laying down their ammunition.

"Who told of you, then, Bill?" the woman asked presently. She sounded as if she'd been blubbing.

"One of the masters happened to look in the door then, and, natural enough, he told the Head. Don't blame him. Doing his duty. If I was him I fire myself. I owned it to him. 'I'd have asked for my papers, sir,' I says, 'if it wasn't for my wife and youngster.' Well, there it is. Don't look at me, my girl. I know I've lost my job. I know my character's gone for another like it. I know a job won't be easy to find. I know we're not flush, and can't hardly do what we want for Bessie. I know I can't look you in the face. . . ."

"I'm the one person you can, Bill," she said, "for I'd stick by you if you went to—the bad place."

"Been there," he said, "coming along."

Palmer began to rub his eyes then. I don't think anyone else saw, and, of course, I haven't given him away.

"Come on, my girl," we heard Wickings say. "Let's get along home. I'll be off after something to-morrow morning. When a chap loses a fight, the only thing to do is to learn a lesson for the next."

"That's my man!" Mrs. Wickings said. If you ask me, old Reasoning Power is one.

Nobody said anything till they'd gone. Then Bennet laughed. It was a funny laugh rather.

"I've wasted fourpence," he said, "on that wretched cat."

"I wonder," someone asked, "if these eggs are any good to eat?"

"No," Palmer said. "Throw them at me. I nagged him into it. I—if his kid doesn't get things, and dies, it will be through my fault."

"Look here," I said—I'd been busy clearing the egg mess out of my pocket—"it's no use worrying over what's done. You've got to think out how to do better next time, as old R. P. says. Brother knights! *Oyez!* There will be a meeting of the Round Table directly after tea."

"Of course," I told the meeting, "we'll have to wipe out the last resolution. The Head's made it his job, so it isn't ours. And we don't want to pelt him." (They shouted "Hear, hear!") "Somebody second that, and we'll get on." Bennet seconded. "Unanimous, eh? I'll enter it up presently. The next question is, can we get up a sub. for a man who's been sacked by the Head, without his knowing? There's another thing. We mustn't give Badger away, and make out that we think he was wrong."

"He wasn't," Driscoll said.

"Yes, he was," Palmer contradicted. "He ought to have rounded on me, too. I wonder why he didn't? I suppose he didn't guess that it was my fault. Well, I shall go and tell him!"

"Palmer," I said, "whatever I've said against you I take back. It was all our faults, and I'll go, too."

"It's no use getting into a row for nothing," Bennet said; "we may as well go the whole hog, and ask him to take old Reasoning Power back. I'll make three. I don't care if I get a toshing. What annoys me is wasting fourpence on that cat."

So we passed two resolutions.

187. The previous resolution is rescinded.\* Drill-Instructor Wickings having been dealt with by the Head, the Round Table has

changed its mind. The three shillings advance will not be recovered under the circumstances.

188. A deputation will wait upon the Head to represent that there was ragging, so that Drill-Instructor Wickings had excuse; and that we hope it may be overlooked this time, as it won't occur again, and Drill-Instructor Wickings is greatly respected. The deputation will say that it makes a suggestion to the Head with much diffidence,\* but thinks perhaps he might alter the sentence if he knew the facts. The deputation will be the Knight-President and the Deputy Knight President, and Knight Palmer, and it will be entered in the Book of Chivalry as War Service.

\* \* \* \* \*  
The Head wasn't so warlike as we expected when he saw us. In fact, he rather helped me out when I got in a mess at the beginning.

"You needn't apologise for speaking to me about the affair," he said. "You are quite right to do so. I was going to send for Palmer, and for you, Steel, as I understand that you are President of the Lower School Society. I didn't do so at the time, because I had just a hope that you might come to me of your own accord, as you have done. Thank you! Well, Palmer, how did it happen?"

"I ragged him, sir," Palmer said. "That's how it was. I told him he was a theorist. I knew he wouldn't understand it. I think he thought it was swearing, sir. Then he got his rag out—I mean he was annoyed—and wanted to know what it meant, and I said it was 'a man who trusted to his reasoning power.'"

"That's his nickname, sir," I explained, "and he doesn't like it."

"Doesn't take it for a compliment, eh? And you've come to ask me something?"

"Yes, sir," I said. "With great diffidence and—er—respect for your decisions—and—er——"

"I understand all that," he said.

"Well, sir, we thought, if you'd look over it this time——"

Badger nodded several times.

"You have done the only thing which could make it possible for me to do so," he told us. "I have no doubt that Wickings was aggravated; but, even so, I could not retain him, as an instructor for you, unless you are prepared of your own accord to wipe his very improper action out of your

\* Rescinded.—ED.

\* Diffidence.—ED.

minds. It does you credit that this is the case. It quite wipes out of *my* mind any faults of yours in the matter. Treat the incident as if it had never occurred. He shall return. You have behaved as gentlemen in coming to me. Put down in the Minutes of the Round Table that I said so. I was Knight-President somewhere about the year 1874 . . . *Donsitabit*, eh ? ”

He chuckled more like a father than a Head, and shook hands with all three of us. I'd have liked to ask him whether *Donsitabit* was Latin or English, and what it meant, but some subjects you can't very well discuss with a headmaster.

We had another meeting next day, and we passed this minute—

189. The Head having favourably received the deputation, and consented to have Drill-Instructor Wickings back, has requested us to record in the Minutes of the Society (of which he was Knight-President in 1874) that he said that we had behaved as gentlemen in going to him over the affair. We think, however, that our behaviour was not quite satisfactory in some respects, and we hope to do rather better in future, as we consider that the Head has shown himself entitled to the support of the Lower School.

We further decide that, as Drill-Instructor Wickings objects to be called Reasoning Power, he shall be known in future as R. P., and that the meaning shall be treated as strictly confidential.

\* \* \* \* \*

He turned up at our next class all right.

He didn't mention the row, neither did we. He began by saying, “Now, young gentlemen,” and before he went he gave us a big book on “The Science of Boxing.”

“It's very advanced,” he said. “Goes into first principles and all that, and argues things out from them. I can't follow it all myself, but you young gentlemen will be able to, having education and good reasoning power.”

We thought that was a very handsome apology. So did old Double-Barrel. He spoke to me on the quiet about Wickings. “As brother Knight-Presidents,” he said. (He was the last but three before father.) So I told him all about it. (You can trust Double-Barrel.)

“Ah,” he said, “the more reasoning power we get, the more we see that we haven't much! Some people have only enough to know that they've been fools afterwards, eh, Steel ? ”

“Yes, sir,” I said.

“And—talking as two Knight-Presidents, who have felt the responsibility of directing the opinions of others—it's a good work to get them to see it beforehand, eh ? ”

He clapped me on the shoulder and laughed. He's jolly artful, and, if you ask me, it wasn't only Wickings that he set out to give me a tip about. But I knew the old boy was right. So I've written this yarn to prove that rows are “no earthly,” and save chaps the trouble of using up their reasoning power working it out for themselves.

## STILL.

**T**HE river, flowing in the quiet air,  
Murmurs its peace around my dreams of you ;  
Old hopes, so long asleep, awake anew  
While still my hands are fragrant from your hair.

I know not what the roses say to this,  
Waiting the twilight and the nightingale ;  
Old memories, pausing by the sedge, grow pale  
While still my lips are throbbing from your kiss.

To-morrow is a legend and not true !  
Here by the river let to-day's delight  
Linger, and overflow into the night  
While still my heart is warm and sweet from you.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



"The King of Strawberry Flats made his way to the nearest height and stood looking for a long moment below."

# THE KING OF STRAWBERRY FLATS

By COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

**A** TALL man, bearded, shoulders bent, with long arms protruding from ancient, shrunken coat-sleeves, and a tattered hat, pulled tight in but poor concealment of his grey, tousled hair, stood in the doorway of his careening, sod-roofed cabin, staring at the dawn ten thousand feet above sea-level. High above him, at timber-line, an invisible sun was softening the great rock slides with splotches of mauve and purple and glimmering yellow. A waterfall, spraying from the cliffs, frolicked in blue and gold; in a

spruce tree a hundred yards away a mountain squirrel chattered and scolded; nearer a camp-robber cocked his head in precocious fashion, hopped closer in anticipation of a crust of bread or vagrant rind of bacon, then circled away again. But the man saw none of it; he merely shifted his rifle and stared, far into the reaches of the timber country, rising in dark luxuriance for a thousand feet at the edge of the serrated plateau region which spread outward from the cabin—stared as though seeking an indefinable thing, like

a man watching for a wraith in which he did not believe.

Down in the mountain village of Central City, where the stories of his hermitage were fashioned according to the vagaries of imagery, they called him the King of Strawberry Flats. No one really knew him, save from the meagre tales of those few wanderers who passed his cabin—tales they amplified according to their desires; no one ever went to see him—for himself. Twice a year he came to town, three pack-mules trudging beneath the weight of sacked ore—gleaned by gruelling work from a yawning hole behind his cabin, where a meagre streak of high-grade mocked all efforts except those of one who cared only for a bare existence—to cash it at the sampler, to make his rounds of the stores, then, pack-jacks tugging reluctantly at their lead ropes, disappear again on the high trail leading along the tumbling reaches of Mad Creek, on upward to his kingdom of Strawberry Flats.

They had given him the country through his simple possession of it and because no one else wanted it. They had dubbed him king because he reigned there supreme, in a land where there were no subjects save the swift-winged magpie and the chattering squirrel, the screeching coyote and the waddling woodchuck; his kingdom of the high country, where the snow lay summer-long in the stretches of the pines, where the strawberries bloomed in solid vistas of white, only to wither and die with the swift descent of frost ere their sturdy efforts might bear the reward of fruit; where the deep red of the Indian paint-brush splotched the dunness of rotting logs, piled in the path of the spring snow-slides, and the columbines bloomed beside the seepage rifts. He had been there for years; no one even cared why.

And now he stood at the doorway of his ramshackle cabin, high-powered rifle gripped tight in a lean hand, grey eyes, tired as from sleeplessness or some reawakened haunting memory, searching the high places. He had been awake most of the night, ever since the first sound had come to him from up there in the timber, agonised, yet proudly sonorous—a roaring, stricken message which had jerked him to consciousness and held him there throughout the hours until it should come again. With the first streak of daylight it had sounded once more. Now, unbelieving, shaken with the nervousness of a man afraid to trust his own con-

clusions, he was at the doorway, rifle ready, starting on the trail of a thing in which he did not—could not—believe. It was not the first time that the King of Strawberry Flats had heard old sounds, familiar sounds, in the sweep of the wind through the spruce trees, in the clatter of Mad Creek; men come to fear their minds—when there is nothing else save memory.

Like a leaping thing, the sunlight travelled from crevice to rock-slide, from dust-coated patch of eternal snow to the tips of timber-line. At last the King travelled with it.

The cabin door remained wide behind him; there was no need to close it. With the swinging pace of the mountaineer, avoiding the treachery of loose rocks as though by instinct, worming his way through the clutching thickness of the willows at Mad Creek, he moved hurriedly up the course of the stream, to cross it at last, then to clamber onward toward the timber, with its patches of melting snows and carpetings of needles, rotting there in mouldy layers, year on year. Keen eyes roving, head turning in almost automatic action with the forward swing of his body, he strode upward and forward as though impatient, like a man in haste to put from him a crazed vagary and end the hauntings of an impossible creature of an overburdened imagination. But fifty feet within the timber he halted, gun suddenly half raised in tight-clenched hand. There in a patch of snow was the print of a great paw and the red of new-sprung blood from rock-torn cushionings. The King of Strawberry Flats crouched. His actions took on an animal stealth—a tree, a quick swerve into the open, then the refuge of a tree again and a halt to reconnoitre. On farther and a print again. A halt, the rifle higher, nearer to his shoulder, a torn spot in the thick layers of the pine needles, long moments in which he stood as still as the windless pines about him, waiting, listening. Another sally, then an instinctive, almost a convulsive movement, as the rifle-butt jammed hard against a shoulder and a grey eye aligned the sights. He had been caught in the open. Fifty feet before him crouched a tawny thing, an impossible thing in this wilderness of timber-line—a beast which could exist in this country only behind the bars of a gold-fretted cage, yet there it was—spear-tipped tail curling, heavy Nubian mane surmounting its neck, paws moving fretfully, wrinkled skin furling from—

It was this which caused the trigger finger to relax, the gun to be slowly moved down-

ward into a less threatening position. Those tight-drawn lips revealed no teeth; the hiss—to something far back, almost forgotten in the man's brain—seemed more of surprise than threat. A moment he waited for the first move of attack. But the big cat remained crouched, the blood from its torn paws staining the snowdrift, its eyes dull with fatigue and pain; finally the tight-drawn lips lost their tenseness and dropped over the toothless jaws. The great, majestic head moved slowly; there came a resemblance of a whine, throaty, gruff, from a thing too imperious to plead. The gun-hand of the man went lower; for a long time he merely stood, watching through narrowed eyes. Then suddenly, as though by impulse, he took a step closer.

"Sahib!" he called. The lion only stared at him "Monarch! Duke! Emperor!" It brought no echo, except the nervous lashing of the whip-like tail, the watchfulness of pain-ridden eyes. Once more the voice of the hunter: "King! Major!"

Still no response, no token of memory. But likewise there showed no enmity, no fear, no fidgeting threat of attack. The King raised a hand to his grizzled chin and rubbed in nervous reflection.

"He ain't settling," came with a mumble. "They always settle and set their haunches."

Again he took a step of approach. Once more he called, his voice lower with confidence: "Prince! Durbar! Colonel! Rajah!"

Then the rifle arm relaxed.

"Always the same old names," came in a monotone. "Rajah!"

The lion hissed, as it had hissed in answer to the sound of its first recognisable command. Again that thin hand rubbed at a bearded chin, as though to re-summon memories long departed. At last a barking command, kindly, yet with the insistence of superiority:

"Rajah! Seats, sir! Seats!"

The hiss of understanding; a slow turning of the heavily-maned body; a crawling, uncertain movement as the great beast gazed about him, then, apparently bewildered, settled once more, staring with age-dimmed eyes toward the waiting man. The King of Strawberry Flats nodded.

"Looked for his pedestal," came in the same monotone. "Tame as a house-cat. Funny, how they'll run away from the only thing they know. He's from some show

clear down in the flat country. Wonder he didn't die—getting up here. Pneumonia—lions get pneumonia awful easy." It was as though he were repeating the text of an ancient lesson. "They've probably given him up by now. Rajah!"

Then the man once more moved cautiously forward, to halt, then forward again. That night a dim light burned in the "palace" of the King for the first time since spring had caused a loitering of the sunset. It was midnight. A tall, angular man sat slouched beside a tawny, swaddled thing in a corner; at last to move to the replenishing of a poultice, to potter about at the little sheet-iron stove as he heated cloths and mustard, then suddenly to halt, head half turned, with the wondering knowledge that he had been humming the staccato-timed refrain of ancient march music, forgotten for years. A twinge as of pain crossed his bearded features. The eyes suddenly grew old, the face haggard. A hand was raised, as if to brush away by physcial contact a thing which had reared itself to haunt him. He turned and for a long time stared in agonised fashion at the panting, fever-ridden beast.

"We can't have this!" came dully. Then, silent, he returned to his work of succour.

Two weeks later an exploring fisherman passed the cabin of the King of Strawberry Flats, gaped in fright, then hurried on down to the village to tell a new story of the vagrant being who ruled, no longer alone, ten thousand feet above sea-level. But the King did not know.

He realised only that his life had come to be a thing of torturing complexities, of times when he and a tame, good-natured, toothless old lion, now recovered from the threatened effects of its exposure, would roam the hills like a man and his dog, of other moments when the shadows gathered in the evening, and strange, horrible things rose to haunt him, things to which his brain reverted against his every struggle of will, pictures which bade him look upon them in fascinated recollection, only to blur with the realisation of that to which they led, and to send him striding into the night, lean hands brushing at his eyes, pacing the lonely flats in frenzied, vain efforts at forgetfulness.

There were times also when he would sit with the beast before him, like a man welcoming an old friend, asking questions, as though this dumb thing could answer—

queries about a bygone day and bygone times, of persons, of things.

"And the Wallace show—is it still out? Old Ben Wallace, you know? Hard fellow that—knew every trick in the racket. Uncle Ben they used to call him. But I guess he's dead now."

Night after night, day after day, in which old refrains came unbidden, to be sung lustily and with a strange happiness, until that something would click in his brain and bring him to gaunt, staring recollection. Periods of railing, when, pacing and cursing, he would revile the toothless, hissing old beast, which for the moment he hated, only to halt, immobile, then to call it to him, and stand silent, a trembling hand fingering the greasy mane, while grey eyes stared far beyond the white-patched spaces of Strawberry Flats and into years departed.

Weeks—a month—they hunted together, the lion trailing him, waiting, like some great shaggy dog, for him to tear the flesh from the bones of the kill, shred it, and toss it to eager, toothless jaws. A month in which the already thin cheeks of the man grew more haggard, the eyes more cavernous, and the periods more frequent when he would rail in agonised anger, arms aloft, hands clutching, his voice raised to the proximity of a scream:

"That's right! Follow me—follow me and torture me! Haven't I paid enough, in all these years up here, without you? What did you come for, bringing up these ghosts?"

But the lion, hearing in it all only the cursing of the menagerie attendants, the gruffness which never had meant more to his well-treated existence than so many mouthings, would only hiss and come closer, or follow to the best of its poor-sighted ability when the being which meant its food, its shelter, its warmth and comfort and life, would stride away to climb the rocks or pace the lonely flats in the paroxysms of his sufferings.

There were nights when the lantern gleamed dimly, and a tall figure stood, shadowy and gaunt, beside the deal table in the ramshackle cabin, with thin hands working dexterously with three playing cards, laying them face downward or raising them, first at one side, then another, turning to cough in mock fashion, waiting as though for a word from some imaginary being. Then a thin smile, the toss of a card, a shrug of the shoulder, and after that the pain again, the railings, the bursting accusations:

"That's right, lie there and stare at me! I never thought of it before you came! All out of my mind—I'd put it out, up here in the hills! Years and years to do it. Then you've got to come along! What are you trying to do—drive me back? Is that it—is that what you came for?"

Then the lion would hiss, stare blankly toward the fading form as it swept out into the darkness, and struggle slowly to rise on rheumatic legs, that it might follow.

Thus the spring travelled into the summer, and to a day sultry in its still heat on the expanses of Strawberry Flats, sheltered as they were by the higher hills about. Here the air was lifeless; above, the wind souged through the pines at timber-line, mingling with the turbulent noise of the waterfall to form strange combinations of sounds and carry them to the tortured ears of a man who heard in spite of himself. The tumbling waters of Mad Creek sang to him; he heard familiar strains in the calls of the birds; the balminess of the air brought to him pictures of dusty lots; the roar of the pines was metamorphosed into the bellow and blatter of places strangely apart from this land of loneliness. And he whirled like a maddened thing, his rifle half raised, trigger finger itching for the pressure, to face the stumbling brute behind him, waiting patiently for food from his master's hand.

"I ain't going to stand it any longer! It's you or me—we can't go on this way, I tell you! We can't——"

But the lion only came closer, fawning before its master. The rifle went slowly downward. The lips moved with mere mouthings for the moment. Then, in a mumble:

"It ain't your fault, Rajah. You didn't have anything to do with it. You've got a right to live—it ain't your fault."

At dusk the King of Strawberry Flats, silent, stooped, threw halter ropes upon two of his pack-jacks when they came into the rickety corral for the night. He brought forth the dusty pack-saddles and strengthened their time-worn straps and cinches. Then, while the night birds cried and the coyotes screeched in the distance, he worked, in the pale gleam of the dim lantern, at the fashioning of a heavy crate of rough-hewn green spruce, its corners nailed with wooden pegs and lashed with willow bark. At dawn, the eyes of the burros blinded with sackcloth that they might not revolt against the thing they

were to carry, the King of Strawberry Flats backed his pack animals to a shrouded cage which stood on the log doorstep of his cabin, and by herculean twisting and leverage fastened it between them.

Within, the cabin was clean-swept. The few dishes had been placed in trim array upon the shelves. The bunk was made and smoothed. In the corner where once a rheumatic, half-blind, toothless lion had been wont to recline upon his bed of sacking, was only so much flooring now. Slowly the King of Strawberry Flats closed the door of his ramshackle palace; he glanced about him at the tumbling stream below. the waterfall above, at the fringes of the pines, then silently, grimly took his position at the head of his pack animals and led the way along the trail toward civilisation.

They gathered about him when at last he reached the village, there to stop his strange caravan before the little building which passed as a city hall. Once or twice the city clerk had halted in his fishing trips for a moment of banter or the offer of a smoke. Now the King turned to him as to a solitary friend.

"You've got that empty cage in the park, where the bear was before it died? There ain't anything in it now?"

"Nothing but room. Why? Got a donation for the city?"

"I'm"—a lean hand brushed at tired eyes—"I'm going away. I've got that lion—guess you've heard about it. I'd kind of like a home for it. It'll be yours if I don't come back."

"A lion?" Then the city clerk smiled. "Yes, I know. I've heard about it."

A half-hour later the automobile stage from Steamboat Springs rushed into the village city-bound, halted for gas and oil, then took on an awkward, gaunt passenger, who approached the machine with something of fear and with more of determination, clutched grimly at the side of his seat in preparation for the beginning of his first ride in an automobile, and remained silent and grim throughout the two-hour journey to town. There, a confused, wandering relic in a hurly-burly of thronging persons, of shrieking whistles and bellowing motor-horns, a stoop-shouldered old man, suddenly older in the comparison of his ancient clothing and his almost childish unfamiliarity with the evidences of progress all about him, the King of Strawberry Flats asked his questions and blindly followed

the directions given him, only to become lost and directionless again, to ask anew and once more travel onward.

Block after block, each with its terror at the crossings, its sallies and retreats, its trepidated negotiation, at last brought the journey's end before an arched sign. He glanced about once more with that longing in his eyes which had marked their gaze up there in the hills when he had said "Good-bye" to the pines, to the rock-slides, to his dominion of Strawberry Flats. Then, one step at a time, he went down the worn stone stairway to a big room, to a desk with a man in blue behind it.

"I guess you'll know about me," he said, when the desk sergeant at last looked up. "I'm wanted—for murder."

"So?" The officer took it calmly. Strange bequests or announcements were to him neither exciting nor unusual. "What's your name, and when did you pull the job?"

The King of Strawberry Flats hesitated. The Adam's apple of his lean neck bobbed once or twice, sole outer evidence of the turmoil that seethed within. At last: "Archer. That's my real name. Edward W. Archer. I killed a man in Wheeling, West Virginia, thirty-eight years ago, in a circus fight."

"Oh!" The sergeant raised an eyebrow in command, and a detective, listless until now, moved in unconcerned fashion to a position of vantage. "Oh! So you killed a man in Wheeling? Thirty-eight years ago, you say. Little late coming in about it, ain't you?"

"Yes." The fingers of a lean hand began to drum slowly on the desk. "I tried to hide out—ran away. But it followed me up."

"That's a bad habit murder's got. Wouldn't let you alone, huh? You ain't the first one. How'd you bump the guy off?"

Again those lean fingers tapped on the desk. "As—as I said, in a circus fight. I was a gambler—on the Waldron Circus—a thief, if you want the truth. I'm younger than I look—worrying about it, I guess. I've lived alone since it happened. I wasn't much more than a boy."

"That's usually a good stall. How old?"

"Twenty. I'd run away to join the circus four years before. I worked on animals—assistant to the trainer. Then I got in debt—had to make more money



than I was getting. They didn't pay much."

"Guess that's right. So they put you to grifting, huh? Doin' what—short-changing?"

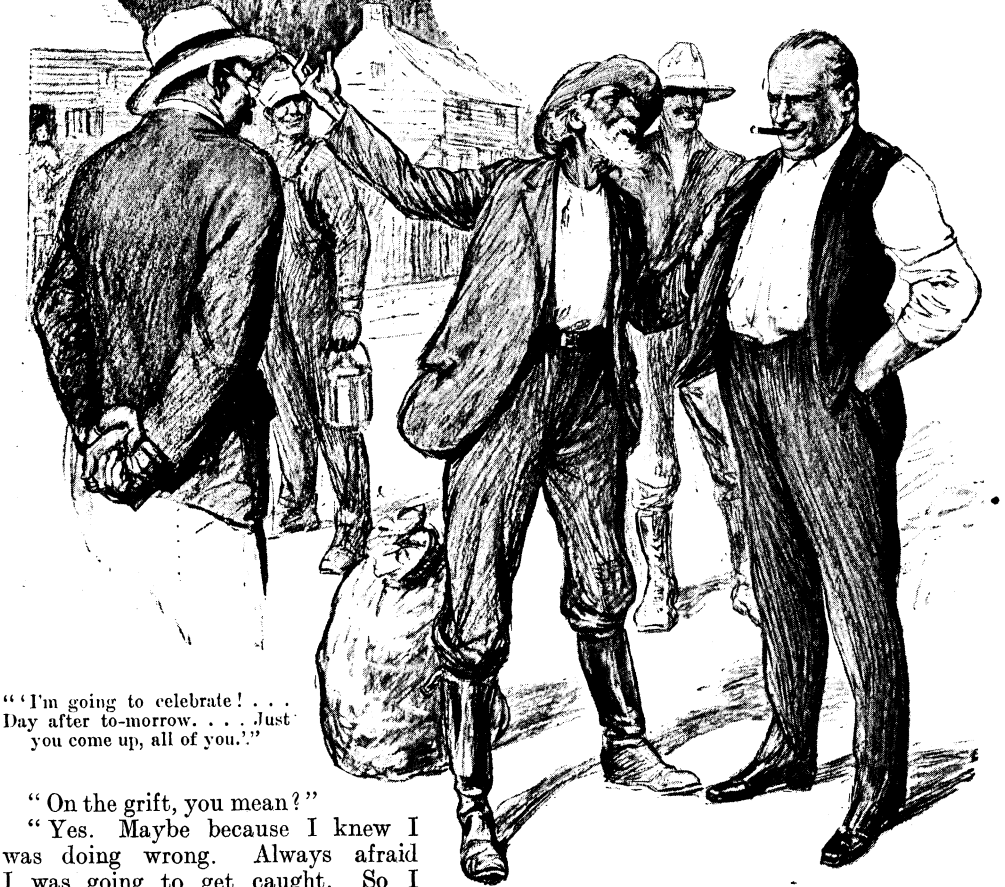
"No, three-card monte. My hands always have been thin this way. I could do some pretty good tricks with cards. I'd just learned it in fun. But I was always afraid in there."

"You pulled the gat and knocked off somebody. Shot him—is that it?"

The lean fingers ceased their tapping, to be raised slowly and pass before dull eyes. "You see, he caught me. You know how they work three-card monte."

"Worked, you mean," said the desk sergeant, leaning forward with a new interest. An element of pathos had come to the being before him—a man out of the past, talking of things of a bygone day as though they still existed. "They don't pull that junk any more. Ain't seen one of them gaff games for so long I wouldn't know it. Remember the racket, Ed?"

The detective moved closer. "Think I do. Worked it about the same way



"I'm going to celebrate! . . . Day after to-morrow. . . . Just you come up, all of you."

"On the grift, you mean?"

"Yes. Maybe because I knew I was doing wrong. Always afraid I was going to get caught. So I carried a gun."

"That's usually a fool stunt."

The King of Strawberry Flats nodded. Again the lump in his throat worked, up and down, up and down. "Yes, I know. I've thought about it since. Any-way——"

they worked the shell game, didn't they? Instead of using the shells they had three cards—haven't seen it myself for a long time. The dealer would lay 'em all out, then pretend to cough, and turn his head over his shoulder. While he was doing

this, the capper would crimp one of the cards and show it to the sucker, so it didn't seem that there'd be any chance for a slip-up. Then the dealer would pick up the cards and shuffle 'em again and lay 'em down on the table, and bet that nobody could pick out, say, the Jack of clubs, which was the card that the capper had crimped. Of course the sucker would fall for the gaff and point out the card. That's where he'd get hooked, because the dealer had crimped another one when he was shuffling 'em. Am I right, grandpa?"

The Adam's apple bobbed excitedly. "Yes, that was it.

when the chance came, ran under the side-wall and got down to the railroad yards. It was night. Once the police came through the yards searching for me. I could hear them talking. I hid between



"Celebrate?' they asked, and winked, one to the other."

That's when I was always afraid—panicky. That day in Wheeling there'd been a lot of quarrels. We'd robbed a man down to his last ten dollars. When he lost that, he called me a cheat and jumped at me. The gun was in my hand before I realised it. I pulled the trigger and he fell. Then I saw the blood spurt from a hole in his forehead. People crowded around. A doctor came from somewhere and pushed through to him. I heard him call out that the man was dead. I mingled with the crowd, then,

the wheels of a car. Then, when they were gone, I beat my way out of town on a freight train, and kept travelling west. I've been up in the hills ever since."

"And now you've come down to 'fess up and take your gaff? That it?"

The grey tousled head nodded. "Yes, that's it."

"Kind of tough at that." The desk-sergeant scribbled in vague fashion on a scrap of paper. "All this time you've hid out won't help you much. There ain't any statutory limit on murder."

The lump in the throat moved slowly. "Yes, I know."

After that a pause. Then: "Guess you'd better put him in stir, Ed, until I can take it up with the Chief and wire back to Wheeling. There wouldn't be any record here."

"No, not with a case that old. Come along, grandpa."

He followed dazedly, as dazedly to submit to search and to give his name again in answer to the questioning of the gaoler, then dumbly to accompany the officer down the steel-paved corridor and to a cell. There he merely sat and stared, or drowsed and awoke that he might stare again, eyes peering from their hollows toward the bars, black and shadowy against the diff light of the corridor—eyes which took no notice of passing figures as night came on. There was nothing to see, save that which lived in years gone by; nothing to look for, nothing to notice. Thus a night went by, and the day and the night which followed. Then the cell door opened. Ed, the detective, was waiting to lead him beyond the steel-barred enclosure of the gaoler's room and to the office of the Chief.

"Your name's Archer?" The Chief had tossed a long telegram to his desk.

"Yes, sir."

"We've just gotten a wire from Wheeling."

"Yes, sir."

There was silence for a moment. At last: "I'm afraid we can't cause you much trouble, Archer. Wheeling says there's no charge against you."

"No charge?" The man raised himself in his chair, his white hands suddenly grasping tight at its sides. "You say there's no charge? But I killed him—they've——"

The Chief smiled. "You *thought* you killed him," came quietly. "So did the doctor that first examined him, apparently. The fellow's name was Mason. He was just hurt—knocked unconscious from a fractured skull—not killed. Fact is, he got over it and lived until about three years ago. So there you are—you're free."

"Yes, that's it." A tottering king rose from his chair and walked aimlessly around the room. "That's it, then—I didn't kill him? I'm free—no charge against me? Not a murderer, then?" He turned and

gaped at the Chief. "I'm all right—there's nothing against me?"

"Nothing except attempt to kill with a deadly weapon, and nobody to prosecute, and not enough interest in the thing to send anybody here to get you, if that's what you mean."

"Then I can go? Nobody to bother me?" Thin, nervous fingers tapped at a trembling lip. "I—can be just like anybody else?"

"Do what you please." The Chief raised the telegram, studied it again, then tossed it once more to the desk. "We can't prosecute a man if there isn't a charge against him. We don't want you."

Ed, the detective, walked beside him, young arm in old arm, back to the gaol room and to the process of checking out. With a shrug of the shoulders he relieved the trembling hands of their duties, tucking into the King's worn pockets the few possessions which incarceration had taken from him—his knife, a torn handkerchief, the black purse with its dozen or so gold pieces, the fruit of years of hoarding. Then he led him forth, to assist him over the crossings and along the side-streets to the office of the Inter-Mountain stage, where a driver was making ready for the morning trip to the hill country.

"Brace up, grandpa!" he commanded jovially as he waved a hand in farewell. "You're all right. Get it out of your mind—nobody's after you."

But the King of Strawberry Flats only gripped the side of the automobile, and stared, gripped and stared until the last reaches of the city had been passed, until, with whining gear and throbbing engine, the machine had begun to make its way up the first of the long grades that led to the higher hills. Then slowly, as if fearing his senses, he began to look about him, stealing a glance now and then at the rushing pines beside the roadway, hesitant lest it should all be untrue—unreal. At last the stage-driver, with something of surprise, bent his head at the sound of a voice beside him—

"The hills weren't ever prettier than they are now."

"That's about right. Nice season of the year, this."

Silence for a long time. Then: "I'm going to kind of mix with folks now. Ain't ever had the chance before."

"No?" It was all impersonal to the driver. "Haven't had much time, eh?"

"Yes, I've had the time. But that wasn't it. I—but I'm going to mix with 'em more now. Lots of folks thought I was a hermit."

"So? Well, that's the way it goes. Huh, guess I'd better tend to business! Bad stretch of road here."

After all, he was paid to drive, not to listen to the garrulities of an old man. The miles streamed on. Gradually the gaunt figure loosed its tensivity. The gaze of sunken eyes roamed freely as with understanding. Now the shaggy head was thrown back and swinging with the rhythm of long forgotten songs—songs in which the singing was a thing of spirit, of surcease and of joy. Lean hands rose and fell in cadence, nor did they pass before his eyes as they had done in other times. Beside the roadway the chipmunks scampered to safety as the roaring machine approached and a grey-haired man leaned far outward to laugh at them and chide them for their fear. Mile after mile—happy miles, glorious miles—then Central City.

Through the streets and stores of the town he carried his invitation—an old man suddenly young, laughing childishly, with the tears ever near the surface, spreading the word up street and down, as he impoverished himself by his purchases, and gave his message to Central City, for all the world that cared to hear—

"I've come back! I've gotten my deliverance! I can be meeting folks now! You've called me the King of Strawberry Flats, ain't you? Oh"—and he laughed with all the joy that a human being can know—"I've heard you talking behind my back. But that doesn't bother me now—that's all right, that is. I ain't like I used to be, you know. I've always thought I was a murderer. But I ain't. So I don't care what folks say now. And I'm going to celebrate!"

"Celebrate?" they asked, and winked, one to the other.

"Yep. Day after to-morrow. Me and my lion—the King and his court. Get that? Up there in the hills, at Strawberry Flats. Just you come up, all of you, early as you want to, and stay as long as you like. That's what I'm buying all this truck for. I've got a two-year-old up there, just right to be barbecued. I turned him out yesterday, but I'll find him, and have him butchered and roasted to the King's taste by day after to-morrow."

"Regular feast, huh?" There was always

someone to interject a leading comment. The King was glad.

"Yes. I'd have it sooner, only I can't get it ready before that. A beef's always got to hang twelve hours, you know—animal heat. Then there's the pit and everything. But it'll all be ready bright and early day after to-morrow. And we'll be watching for you—me and old Rajah. The King of Strawberry Flats, you know, a-mixing with his subjects, as the fellow'd call it. You won't forget?"

"Sure not!" they answered. Then, laughing and chattering, the King went his way, to throw open the door of the bear pit in the centre of the town's infinitesimal park, to pat at the greasy mane as Rajah hissed his welcome, then to rush, still chattering and excited, to the saddling of his burros and the placing of the hand-made cage between them. That night a bonfire gleamed on the space before the palace of the King. Stretched from the parting branches of a dead pine hung a newly-slaughtered steer, cooling in the simple process of the crisp mountain night; in the shadows lay a great, toothless cat, growling in delight at a pan of bovine blood. It was an hour of song, of joyous silliness, which the lion, deep in gluttony, neither heard nor heeded. Then came a command from the King—

"Here! Can't have this, foolin' around and wasting half the night. Got to get to bed, Rajah. We're just packed with work to-morrow!"

A new day came, with its labours incessant. There were so many things to do—so many, many things—the digging of the pit, the unbundling of the heavy sacks of rolls and candy and apples and what-not which had been lugged upward upon the backs of the already overburdened jacks, the hewing of standards, the fashioning of the spit, but the hands which sought the tasks were willing hands, eager hands, and a song of bygone times ever sounded in unison with their efforts.

Night, but still the labours continued, the lion dozing in the heat of the barbecue fire. Dawn, and with it the heat-crusted body of a young steer, turning slowly above the even coals—a man rubbing at tired, smoke-red eyes. Sunrise, and a new frenzy of activity as a happy, bearded man leaped to the assembling of half a hundred details, forgotten until now. Deep morning, and he halted, as he had halted a dozen times before, to stare down the trail toward town.

"They ought to be coming along now,

Rajah. I'll have to keep a good watch-out. You can't run around loose when they get here. They don't know you like I do—somebody might be afraid."

But an hour passed, and an hour after that. The lion roamed in freedom. Nobody had appeared on the up-trail: the steer still hung unbutchered on the spit. Slowly, the rheumatic old cat trudging behind him, the King of Strawberry Flats made his way to the nearest height and stood looking for a long moment below.

"Funny somebody ain't on the trail," he mused. "Still, they might be just around the bend—you can't see more'n a short quarter from here."

And once more, the toothless beast following, he returned to the scene of his festivities, there to toss light twigs of aspen and green willows on the bed of coals, and wait again.

Another hour passed: the morning chattering of the squirrels ceased. The sun soared higher, to light the townward trail with yellow brilliance, unspotted by shadow of watched-for forms. Afternoon, but still the trail showed bare; still the vast expanse of Strawberry Flats echoed to no guest save the rattle of leaves beneath the scampering paws of unbidden chipmunks, the scolding of the camp-robbers, clustered in pine and spruce. Again the King made his journey, to stare, to wait, and to muse in wonderment.

"There couldn't have been any mistake about it. Surely they understood me—that I said they were to come to-day. Maybe they all thought it'd be better to wait and come along together later in the afternoon, when more of 'em can get away. That must be it."

But the afternoon deepened in loneliness. The sun travelled on, the first deep purples began to make their appearance in the crevices beneath the drifts of eternal white. On the doorstep of the cabin a tired old man drowsed and straightened, drowsed and straightened, alert for any hopeful sound or sign, but the trail below was bare.

Sunset. A growl, and old Rajah raised himself in stiffened surprise from his place beside the almost dead barbecue fire. On the doorstep an old man shook himself in agitated fashion, rubbed hastily at his eyes, straightened the tattered hat which had slanted itself over his forehead, and came to his feet. Someone had called, from the shelter of spruces, a hundred yards from the cabin. Or was it——?

But the voice came again: "Hey, watch that varmint, will you? Where's——"

"He's all right! Don't mind him—he's all right!" The King of Strawberry Flats grasped his toothless companion by his shaggy mane and hurried him within the cabin. "Don't you mind him, now! He can't get out of there. Where are the rest of the folks?"

"What's that?" A form showed at the edge of the timber, booted, a pack on his back. "Say, you're the fellow they call the King of Strawberry Flats, ain't you?"

"Yes, of course. Been waitin' here all day. Come on up and ——"

"Can't. I'm in a hurry. They said you could show me the pass to Ute Forks."

Still eager, still with the one thought in his mind, the King went toward the man at the timber. A lean hand pointed out a trail which wound in and out, a film-sprayed ribbon, beneath the waterfall.

"Always like to look at that myself," he said, then suddenly caught at the form as it turned away. "Why, you ain't——"

"Sure—got to be on time for work in the morning. Going over to the mines. They told me down in town you'd have to point out the pass."

"Oh! Then you did come from town. I was afraid for a minute—were they getting ready to leave down there?"

"For where?"

"Why, for up here—up to my barbecue. They all said they were coming. I—invited them."

"Oh!" The miner surveyed the bearded being before him curiously, appraisingly. "That's right," he said. "I heard 'em talking about it." Then: "You didn't really expect 'em?"

"Expect them? Why, of course! I invited them! I worked all night on it. There it is—the steer cooked, the biscuits waiting. You cannot have understood. They all promised. I've fixed up enough for the whole town. Come on"—he paused with a happy thought—"I'll make you a sandwich and——"

But the man shook his head. There had come an expression of anxiety, something of fear—memories hurrying to him of the weird stories they told about this strange being at the foot of Ute Forks Pass.

"No—no, thanks. I'm in a hurry. Night coming on, you know." He moved impulsively toward the timber-line trail, to tread the upward path for a short distance, then suddenly to halt. He scraped a boot on

the rocky soil, a crude sense of pity fighting through the armour of his churlishness.

"About them people from town," he called, "I wouldn't wait up for 'em. You know how town folks are. Prob'ly thought you were just raving to hear yourself talk. Funny notions they get sometimes."

Then he faded, upward, upward, while behind him a man stood taut and straight for an instant, before his shoulders sagged.

"Oh!" He said it to himself, to the white blooms of the strawberries, to the great expanse of his weary, lonely kingdom. "Funny notions they get sometimes!"

He turned slowly, with dragging steps. At last he was crouched again on the door-sill, head deep between his shoulders, dangling arms listless over gaunt, sprawled knees. The shadows deepened. Behind him a lion scratched on the heavy door for freedom. A lank arm rose, pushed open a way for him, then dropped again. With slow, stiffened steps a great cat came forth, hissed in friendly fashion, and settled at his feet.

The sun departed. The purples grew deeper on the high drifts, to melt into grey and then dissolve in blueness. By and by the stars came out. High above, the wind whined through the pines at timber-line, carrying from far away the faint yapping of a vagrant coyote. The form on the door-sill straightened slightly; a hand went outward, to fumble, then in slow, methodical fashion, to pat at the greasy mane of a tawny pet.

"Well, Rajah"—it was half mumble, half whisper—"we got along before, you and me. I guess——"

He said the rest of the sentence silently. Above in the pines the wind grew stronger, more dolorous. In the great pit, beneath the shadowy form of an uncarved steer, the last of the embers flared for an instant, glaring like some angry eye upon an old, bent man, his thin hand still patting the roughened mane of a toothless lion. Then slowly its brilliance faded, dimmer, dimmer.

And Strawberry Flats lay in darkness.



## DREAM-BIDDING.

**D**REAM of me, though you never knew  
The look of me, the name I bear;  
Build me a palace of those dreams,  
Then send in dreams to bid me there.

I, too, go dreaming all my days,  
Beloved whom I never knew!  
But day's end has its night of stars,  
Pavilions where I walk with you.

Dream of me, for my life is strewn  
With songs unsung and thoughts unsaid;  
White saltiness of forgotten tears  
Turns at your touch to roses' red.

Our dreams' end has your open arms,  
Voice I shall know, yet never heard.  
Your face unfolding like a flower  
That mists of fate through life have blurred.

ETHEL M. HEWITT.

# TO EVERY DOG HIS DAY!

By G. B. STERN & GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

"**W**ERE I a less courtly man," said Richard Spurnville Carew, "I should say that you, Pauline, were looking a fraction less beautiful than usual."

"Plain?" asked Pauline. "Right down plain?"

He hesitated. "The pink camellia is a white camellia," was his final answer to her question. Pauline Wilmore said disgustedly that she hated camellias, pink or white; they reminded her of the flowers in icing on a wedding cake.

"Carnations?" Carew hazarded. And again she shook her head. There was no doubt but that she was petulant on this afternoon of his arrival at her cottage in Cornwall—petulant and worried, with a watchful eye on the road that wound down from the village to Penvorror Cove, and fingers which played nervously with the pencil she held. Pauline was not herself, and Carew wondered why. He resumed his inquiries. "As a friend, and as one of the most devoted admirers of your work, and, moreover, as a rejected lover of the past fourteen years or more, I must remark, Pauline, that your tints of the wild-rose geranium——" She nodded, passing "geranium"; and, indeed, her skin was of their velvety texture, which looked as though, if you as much as touched it, it would bruise; and her voice had that same sweet huskiness as the scent of their leaves.

"What's up?" demanded the Happy Meddler, abandoning floral metaphor and lapsing into brotherliness. "You look rotten, and you're usually at your best during your eight months in Cornwall. I've always put it down to the cream. Have the cows ceased to yield cream?" And now he, too, began to look upset. The thought of the cream had been besettingly with him all through March, April,

and May. Yet he had wilfully kept away from Pauline until June, when it should be at its best, smooth, thick, yellow, and tasting of cowslips in paradise.

"The cream is all right, Dick. I have ordered two pounds for tea; that should last you till to-morrow. It's rather better than usual, as they have been chewing more buttercups this year. But you are right: there is a fly in the amber, there is a cloud in the sky, there is a bore in Penvorror."

Carew laughed incredulously at the mere idea that Pauline—who, for all her golden hair and wistful, upcurling eyelashes, could snub a bore better than any other celebrity in London—should for one moment acknowledge herself unable to deal with the single stray specimen who had appeared at Penvorror.

"Male or female?"

"Male. His name is Septimus Nutt."

The Meddler chuckled. "I can describe him from that, if all is as it should be. He is round and shiny, with a round shiny face and smooth brown shiny hair. He has a look of shiny benevolence round his features, and his benevolent paunch would look well in a cummerbund."

"You are partly right," Pauline assented in a depressed voice. "What I do notice about him"—and a look of frenzy shot into her blue eyes—"is that he takes off his hat the whole way down the road, from the moment he sees me. It's a Homburg hat, and he jerks up his arm stiffly straight in front of his body, and lifts the hat and puts it back, and lifts it and puts it back, like clockwork, like one of those mechanical dolls you can buy. And, paralysed, I watch this performance from the top of the hill, past Mrs. Bosustow's cottage, and past José's cottage, and past old Garth Nantucket's, till he arrives here. Then he

stays, and stays, and we have deep intellectual conversations. He says that he and I are the only people with deep intellects in all this forlorn Duchy of Cornwall. He is quite terribly humble towards me, because I have 'got there.' At the same time he is envious, and he scowls through his humility. He pays me horrid, fulsome compliments, all about the parts of me that I don't much care about—my brains, for instance, and my fame, and so on. Men who *really* understand me talk to me about my complexion. He has a grievance, too, the beast!" Pauline went on, working herself up. "It creeps into everything he says. The grievance is that he has never been appreciated, that all publishers are fools, narrow-minded, calculating fools; editors are the same, and critics are just as bad——"

"Ah," interrupted Carew, "then he writes a little bit himself!"

"My dear Dick, of course he writes a little bit himself. What did you think?" She lay back weakly among the velvety tufts and knolls of sea-thrift on the grassy slope which dropped from her cottage to the tiny cove of green water shadowed with purple. "He's spoiling my retreat for me; I shall have to give it up. I shall have to sell the cottage, and go to live in Clapham or somewhere. I can't work! I can't eat! I can't walk! It's all Nutt-pervaded. I can't lie back and dream, as I used to, because all the time I'm looking up the road to see if he is coming, raising his hat, jerking it off and on his shiny, round, brown head."

"Pauline, this is hysteria! Just tell the man you can't be bothered with him; tell him that you are infectious! Leprosy is always a good disease, with a touch of mediæval culture about it that he would appreciate. Tell him you are not respectable. Tell him you don't like him. Or, if there is anything I can do——"

Pauline's gaze strayed up the white, dust-powdered road towards the sign-post at the top of the hill. "He will be here soon," she announced in a voice of despair. "He always hurries along when I have anyone to stay with me, in case it should be a literary celebrity; he would so hate to miss one. P. D. Carr had three hours of him, and hasn't been to see me since, and you know how often P. D. used to be running down from London. It's no good, Dick. There's a kind of droning persistence about Septimus Nutt that I can't cope with; he has *settled* on me!" Suddenly she gripped her com-

panion's arm, starting up and pulling him with her. "Look!" she whispered hoarsely.

The white Cornish road dipped and curled from the sign-post against the sky, that sign-post with its fascinating place-names—Coverack, Mullion, and Llandewednock Church—past the thatched cottages with their archways of fuchsia, purple and red; past the last cottage of all, which was Pauline's, to the green water slumbering deeply in the small triangular cove. It was all very lovely, like some rich but peaceful dream which, by pixy enchantment, has become fixed into reality. Magical Cornwall!

And down the looping road a plump little figure was walking with a quick, jerky, confident step. He had already caught sight of Pauline, for every few minutes he raised his Homburg hat, and raised it again and again.

It was a moment for decisive action. Carew saw at once that an evil spell had fallen on Pauline, and she could no more escape her tormenter of the next few hours than a rabbit can escape from the snake. He shook her gently by the arm. "You've got a batch of proofs to correct; I brought them down with me; they are urgent, and you have got to get them off by to-night's post. . . . See? Go to your room, and I will entertain Septimus Nutt. I like bores; they freshen me up. You may not see him again," quoth the Meddler, leading Pauline towards the cottage door. "After one deep intellectual conversation, an idea might occur to me."

Pauline Wilmore gave a gasp of hope, fervently pressed her comrade's hand, and disappeared within.

\* \* \* \* \*

But it was the Happy Meddler in a very different mood who dashed up into Pauline's room an hour or two later, and hauled her forth. She knew him well, and recognised the symptoms. He was inspired; he had gone berserk; he was well away on his galloping steeds, and now nothing would stop him, short of a collision.

"It's a shame, Pauline! This poor fellow, this Nutt, he has gone rotten simply for want of what every man on this earth should have once—a great, warm, golden day of appreciation. Once in our lives every one of us ought to be able to stand in the very centre of a flood of limelight; to be hoisted shoulder-high, mountain-high, above our fellows. Human nature needs it. It's



pathetic to hear Septimus Nutt loftily pretending that he cares nothing about pomp and acclamation, and yet so obviously craving for it. He is a hungry man in the desert, Pauline. Something has got to be done about it. I mean, *we* have got to do something. It's simply lack of imagination on your part that you have found Septimus Nutt a bore. Bore? He's a tragedy! Why, he might die soon! Think of it—*die*, Pauline, without ever having had what he wants! And then it will be too late."

"If he were a great man——" began Pauline.

But tempestuously Carew overrode her point of view. "If he were a great man, it would not matter in the slightest; he



Suddenly she gripped her companion's arm, starting up and pulling him with her. "Look!" she whispered hoarsely."

would have his own greatness to bear him up. Truly great men don't mind obscurity; it is the little men who mind so badly. It

Pauline patiently; and Carew spent his afternoon squatting on the floor in front of the cupboard, with Septimus Nutt's



"He had already caught sight of Pauline, for every few minutes he raised his Homburg hat and raised it again and again."

made me confoundedly uncomfortable to see Septimus Nutt with that threadbare, tattered coat of his self-esteem wrapped so inefficiently round his naked little soul, his bruised and smarting little soul."

"Dear Dick, your sentiments are getting cheaper and mushier every moment. What sort of a chapter do you suppose I am going to write for my new novel, after hearing you talk like this?"

"But you are *not* going to write to-day, not until you have done something about Septimus Nutt. Look here, Pauline, let's play benevolence. Let's understudy the capricious gods. You have some of his unpublished masterpieces up here, haven't you? Haul them out, and we'll see what can be done with them."

"I have a whole cupboard full," said

manuscripts scattered and billowing around him on the matting.

"It seems to me that this one is the least hopeless," he pronounced at last, and handed it over to Pauline for her inspection.

The Meddler's enthusiasms were invariably catching, and by this time Pauline, who was a warm-hearted child in reality, had also become fired with the desire to give Mr. Septimus Nutt one glorious hour of fame—by honest or else by tricky means.

"Which one is it? 'The Missing Chord'?' I've read about two chapters from the middle of that." She read the rest now at top speed, and then agreed with Carew that between them they might alter the plot and bring it up to date, cut down several of the more ponderous

speeches, strengthen the end, eliminate three of the characters, introduce two others, and thus knead the novel into an almost presentable, almost marketable work. "It's going to be quite good fun," laughed Pauline. "I'll send a note to Alan Barnard, and ask him to come down for the week-end. He loves me very dearly, and, considering that he's a publisher, he's almost human at times."

Alan Barnard proved to be fairly human, but not aggressively so. That is to say, he listened in silence while the Meddler told him the beautiful story of the unappreciated Mr. Septimus Nutt with a perpetual grudge against Fate and commercialism; and then he listened again while Pauline read aloud to him part of the novel on which she and Carew had been frantically working for the last four days, and finally he said: "Well, what do you want me to do?"

"Publish it, of course."

"I mean, with which of you two am I to come to terms?"

"Well," began Pauline doubtfully, for it was odd of the man to be talking at once of what he proposed to pay Mr. Nutt, "I don't suppose our Septimus will expect much advance, or even more than ten per cent. on the first five thousand copies, let's say——"

"Ah," murmured Barnard, "you misunderstand me. I mean, which of you two is going to pay the expenses of the publication of this feeble monstrosity?"

"Alan, dear, you are very sordid, aren't you?"

"I'm not the whole firm," the young publisher reminded her. "Don't blame me; I have a board of directors behind me. My sympathies are all for Mr. Nobody-loves-me Nutt, but 'The Missing Chord' can't possibly sell more than about four hundred at the most, if I am a judge. That doesn't begin to cover our expenses, you know. Won't it do if you tell your friend that a publisher liked his book and very nearly published it?"

Richard Spurnville Carew groaned aloud at the denseness of man in general, and of publishers in particular. "Have you ever heard of Tantalus," he cried despairingly, "the fellow with the parched throat who saw grapes dancing within an inch of his nose and 'very nearly' could reach them? However, though I deplore the steam-roller pace of your wits, Barnard, I see your point about covering expenses, and the board of directors, and all that. You can

send the bill to me; it won't break me, I suppose. I am one of those," he continued grandiloquently "who can find repayment in the sight of happiness in others. It ought to be good sport seeing Septimus Nutt in full enjoyment of his day; his character could stand a bit of sweetening."

"I may have steam-roller wits," argued the future publisher of "The Missing Chord," "but I still don't see that it's going to be much of a day for Septimus Nutt. He will be quite bucked, of course, when he hears that a live and flourishing firm has accepted his novel. (There is to be no mention, I suppose, that you are paying me? No, I thought not; all right.) Well, what I mean is that, after that, there's not much kudos to be gained out of a book that nobody buys, nobody reads, and nobody reviews. It will just fall flat, and will leave him the same embittered chump that he was before!"

The Happy Meddler looked at Pauline, and Pauline looked back at him, and they smiled, a secret, subtle smile. "That part of the conspiracy," said Carew, "may be safely left in the hands of the eminent novelist, Miss Pauline Wilmore, and her strategical accomplice, Richard Spurnville Carew!"

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"The Missing Chord" had been for ten days on the market, and three times daily, at least, had Mr. Septimus Nutt gone fussing down the hill to the cottage in Penvorror Cove, brightly and excitedly to display his reviews, and his advertisements, and the letters of congratulation and thanks he had received from eminent men and women of modern literature. Carew was once more staying at the cottage, in order not to miss the sight of his *protégé* bathing and expanding in the artificially manufactured sunshine of contemporary appreciation. Pauline, who had really devoted herself to the cause with great spirit and unselfishness, had hauled into service all of her friends who were also reviewers and novelists; and those of them who could not honestly criticise the book had, at Carew's suggestion, simply heaped on to it a smothering exaggeration of praise amounting almost to obliteration.

Septimus Nutt was too joyful to be fastidious. For nearly three years only he and his wife Lucy had believed in his genius. Now apparently he had succeeded in impressing it, like a thumbmark into soft wax, on the literary world of the twentieth

century. He flapped the papers about; he flapped his letters about; he repeated again and again that when a man has the true stuff in him it can't be eternally strangled, and that now all his early struggles had proved themselves well worth while, and the natural prelude of success. And he didn't know, poor man—how should he?—that Pauline Wilmore had in her possession the genuine signatures, on their friendly letters to her, of most of these literary celebrities, and that Richard Spurnville Carew had a neat little talent for forgery.

"You must advise me," said Mr. Nutt, "for certainly it is possible that during the period of my sequestration—shall we say?—I have become to a small degree rusty in my exact knowledge of the exchange of courtesies in the modern world of great artists; and my wife, poor Lucy, is not what you might call an intellectual woman." He bowed to Pauline, indicating her different level from poor Lucy's. "So you must advise me, Miss Wilmore, and my humility will be glad of a fellow-writer's advice, as to the exact terms in which these letters should be answered."

"Oh, Mr. Nutt"—Pauline was apparently covered with pretty confusion at thus having to correct a man so much older and wiser than herself over a mere blunder of etiquette—"forgive me, but nowadays it isn't done to answer letters of this description; they would be very offended if you did—very!"

To every dog his day! But a dog's day is bound to wane. Pauline and the Happy Meddler had now done all they could for "The Missing Chord"; it had been published; Pauline's signatures for Carew's copying were exhausted; all those critics whom Pauline happened to know had generously played their part. Neither Carew nor Pauline regretted their conspiracy for a moment. They sat down now, and waited for Septimus Nutt gradually to realise that his fun was over and that his sun was setting. They were preparing soothing balm for his inevitable disappointment at the discovery that fame could not last for ever.

But, strangely, no balm was needed, after all. Septimus Nutt continued to be exultant; indeed, his exultation was waxing instead of waning. Gradually they began to notice, among the reviews of "The Missing Chord," reviews for which they had not been responsible; gradually into the Nutt postbag crept letters of con-

gratulation from known and unknown people, which neither the Meddler nor Pauline could identify as their work. At suburban railway stations Jones was asking Smith: "Have you read 'The Missing Chord,' old man? Ripping book! Going to be the success of the year, they say." And Mrs. Jones was asking Mrs. Smith the same question in the lending libraries and over afternoon tea.

Soon there could be no possible manner of doubt about the grotesque thing that had happened. For some mysterious reason, "The Missing Chord" had caught on. It was a best seller. Mr. Septimus Nutt was a made man.

With an ironic chuckle, Alan Barnard announced to Carew that he was now in a position to repay him for his preliminary backing of the book. The sales had reached thirty-seven thousand, and were still soaring.

Pauline wrote to Carew, now back in London—

"Septimus Nutt still pays me frequent visits; but, thanks to your intervention, dear Dick, all the bitterness and humility, and the eternal cadging for sympathy, are departed from his demeanour. He is very, very kind to me. He shows me how my work could be improved, and why my sales are not all they should be. To all of which I listen submissively, as becomes a novelist who has never yet sold more than twelve thousand of any of her books.

"I should miss all this very much, when I go to London in November for the winter season, if it were not that Septimus Nutt intends coming up also and taking a flat not very far away, so that there is no chance that I should miss his visits. He has at least seven more skins than he ought to have, but he does not raise his hat quite so often. He only begins to raise it at the third cottage along the road, Mrs. Bosustow's, instead of at the top of the hill. Dick, have you ever heard of Frankenstein? He made, I think, a mechanical monster and set it in motion, and could not stop it again. 'The Missing Chord' is going to be our monster!

"You will be glad to hear that Mr. Nutt is writing another book. Though I would give a lot to see his intolerable bombast go up in smoke, I can't help feeling sorry for him. After all, 'The Missing Chord' was written fifteen years ago. Any gift he may have had for artistic expression must have long since gone west, and it is not likely, is it, that he would allow mere scribblers like you

or me to interfere again with his masterpieces? How long will the public go on swallowing him, I wonder?

"The novel is called—hold tight, Dick!—it is called: 'The Heart of a Rose.'"

"Septimus sends you his kind regards."

"Yours in deep gratitude, dear, dear Dick."

"PAULINE."

\* \* \* \* \*

"A visitor to see you, sir," announced Carew's housekeeper at his rooms in Duke Street.

"A strange lady? I mean, do I know her?"

"She hasn't been 'ere before, sir."

"Young? Beautiful?" asked the Meddler, with rising hopes.

The housekeeper answered respectfully: "That's not for me to say, sir."

"Show her in," commanded the Meddler.

It was a dull December morning, and he felt that anything with golden hair, or even a certain shade of red, might lighten up the prevailing dreariness.

She had neither golden hair, nor red; it was not even silver, but just no colour at all. Her age may have been about fifty. She was small, meagre, shabby without being tattered, and she wore her clothes with a dowdiness that springs from the soul and not from any lack of reckless expenditure. Her large eyes alone might have been beautiful once to a young man in love, but now they were frightened, and the lids fluttered anxiously.

"I have seen you often, Mr. Carew, but you don't remember me, of course. No, I see you don't. I am the wife of Septimus Nutt. You know, *the* Septimus Nutt!"

"I know," quoth the Meddler gravely. He had been patronised by *the* Septimus Nutt for three solid hours the week before, at the annual dinner given by the Scribblers' Club. But he went on: "I am very pleased to see you, Mrs. Nutt. Is there anything I can do for you?"

He watched her working her fingers, in their tight gloves, as if she were making a tremendous effort to plunge into unconventionalities, instead of hovering at conversation's edges with the usual polite formalities. She was not a coward—he could see that—and, indeed, he reflected grimly, no coward could have lived for so many years with that plump, shiny, and complaining person whom he had encountered for the first time outside Pauline's cottage last June.

Lucy Nutt gave one gasp, and began to speak rapidly and with touching eloquence.

"It's about Septimus that I've come to see you, Mr. Carew. I am not clever myself, and I can't put things right that have begun to go wrong; but I know that you and Miss Wilmore are very clever indeed, and I can't bear it to go on like this any more. I simply can't bear it, when we used to be so happy!"

It was Carew's turn to gasp now; he thought he had very well restrained any outward expression of amazement, but Mrs. Nutt, who seemed to be all nervous, sensitive intuitions, said at once: "You don't believe that anyone could be happy with Septimus, do you? But, indeed, Mr. Carew, you are wrong. A woman feels things so differently. When I married him, he was so chivalrous. And then, of course, he was young at the time, and full of hope, and he seemed more—how can I put it?—he seemed more *protecting* than men do nowadays, from what I have heard girls say—at least, he used to talk about protection, and about ladies having to be guarded by men. But of course, when it came to it"—a quizzical little smile twisted the corners of Lucy Nutt's mouth—"when it came to it, he was as helpless as any other man, and had to come to me; but I never let him know it." She clenched her hands. "I always knew his writing was beautiful. I'm not intellectual, but I think my admiring him was a help in the bad moments, whatever the publishers did or said. But naturally, when disappointment gets hold of a man, it alters his nature, doesn't it? One has to make allowances for that, and Septimus has been disappointed for nearly thirty years."

Carew began to find Lucy Nutt, with her sudden wisdoms, and her simplicities, and her strained, faithful grey eyes, a rather more beautiful creature than the young radiance of golden hair and slim girlish figure who he had originally expected might enter the December drabness of his rooms. "But surely," he argued, "now that your husband's book has been such a thumping success, he's not embittered any more? So you should be happier than ever, with that one obstacle removed."

And then a dreadful thing happened. Lucy Nutt began to cry. She cried quite softly, like a child who has been crying for a long time past, on and off, when the first violence is abated, and only the pathetic habit remains.

"Oh, please, don't!" cried Carew, terribly upset, and trying clumsily to cope with her tears, offering her, as men do at these moments, alternately tea or a large, clean handkerchief, throwing another log on the fire, and patting her hand. "Please don't! Tell me all about it."

"I am silly," said Lucy Nutt at last, "but, you see, we used to be so happy."

"He doesn't need me at all," replied Lucy Nutt, but more in grief than in bitterness. "I have nothing more to give him. He wanted someone who would believe in him all these years; and while I was that someone, and there was no one else, life was like paradise, in a way, even when he grumbled. But now I can only give him what thousands of people are giving him, and it doesn't



"Oh, Mr. Nutt"—Pauline was apparently covered with pretty confusion at thus having to correct a man so much older and wiser than herself over a mere blunder of etiquette—"forgive me, but nowadays it isn't done to answer letters of this description."

And that seemed to be the *leitmotif* of her sorrow.

Carew was a man whose imagination, once it had been forcibly turned in the right direction, will jump suddenly to the right answer of any spiritual problem long before the seeker of sympathy has had time stammering to explain. "Now that Septimus Nutt is famous," he said very gently, "he doesn't need you any more as much as he used to. Is that it?"

count. You should see the praise and the flattery he gets! You should see his post-bag every day! And he's quite changed; he's not the same man. I suppose it's natural, because, after all, he *is* a very important man nowadays."

With an exclamation of impatience, the Happy Meddler sprang to his feet and began to stride furiously up and down the room. Very important man! Heavens above! Septimus Nutt! Verily Pauline had been

right when she said that between them he and she had created a Frankenstein's monster of illusion that could not be killed. As usual, his intentions had carried him too far. The situation he had produced was even worse than the one he had sought to remedy. He perceived that the Nutts' thirty years idyll of wedded happiness was a rarer and more precious thing than Septimus Nutt's trumpery and artificial glories of authorship. The question was how to destroy the illusion, the monster.

"So it's all over," concluded Septimus Nutt's wife desolately.

"Look here"—the Meddler came to a sudden halt in front of her, and glared ferociously down, though his voice was far from being unkind—"why did you come to me about all this?" For he wondered how much Lucy Nutt knew of the plot—his plot and Pauline's.

Whatever she knew, she only said: "You and Miss Wilmore were so kind in getting Septimus started, so kind and so clever. Wouldn't it be possible for you to do something now?"

His stride came to a halt in front of the bookcase. In the absent-minded way in which people behave when they are hunting for inspiration, he read the titles on the backs of the volumes on the shelves devoted to plays. And there, in one of the titles, he found his inspiration. It lit up in letters of flame inside his brain, like one of the set pieces of Brock's fireworks. The picture he envisioned was that of a woman, remarkably like Mrs. Patrick Campbell, kneeling beside a fire and feverishly burning a manuscript, page after page, great chunks of it.

It was all destroyed now. Nothing remained but a heap of ashes.

And suddenly the Meddler chuckled richly. But—could Lucy Nutt do it? Would she?

\* \* \* \* \*

The papers made a big thing out of the accidental destruction of Mr. Nutt's new novel which the public had been anticipating with so much pleasure. They made even more out of his subsequent dramatic announcement never to write again. "I have not any courage left in me to pick up the pen. Let 'The Heart of a Rose' be my swan song!"

So, in this radiant burst of publicity and mixed metaphor, he slowly faded from the public eye.

\* \* \* \* \*

"My complaints," said Pauline, cupping

her chin in her hands and gazing very sternly at her companion, "are five!"

The Happy Meddler smiled tolerantly. "Only five?"

It was May in Cornwall among the sea-thrift. One ought to be able to say "It was May" with romance playing a tripping game of hide-and-seek in and out of the inflexions in your voice, for at least eleven months of the year, with, perhaps, September thrown in as a convenience for the Mays to start from. Thus: "It was May," and "It was May," and "Four months passed, and May had come round again, to gladden our twain lovers' hearts, for the fourth time since September. . . ."

But this was really May.

And though the lovers were not precisely those two who lay prone among the velvety tufts and knolls of sea-thrift which cushion a Cornish cliff, yet they were talking of a pair of lovers, which is still better, because now we shall know something about them which we should have had little chance of hearing if the lovers had been talking foolishness about themselves.

"First," said Pauline Wilmore, and began to tick off the items on her pretty fingers—till she saw the inkstain, and quickly stopped lest the man should see it too, "first, why did poor Lucy come to you in her trouble, instead of to me? After all, I'm a sister-woman and all that."

Carew merely replied, and one must believe that he meant to be rude: "Call yourself a novelist?"

"A woman," he went on gently, after a pause, "doesn't want sister-women when having to own up that a husband, for some reason, has ceased to love her. Oh, least of all in the world does she want a deliciously enchanting young sister-woman who if she had a husband he wouldn't ever cease to love her. How could he?" finished Carew, but in a whisper, so that perhaps Pauline did not hear him, for all she answered was, "Your grammar is outrageous!" and her head was bent over the sea-thrift, so that even if Dick Carew desired to flirt with her—and he *did* flirt sometimes, the rascal!—he could not see her eyes. And everybody knows that a man must have a light to flirt by. They say, furthermore, that you cannot enjoy smoking a cigarette in the complete dark.

"Secondly," Pauline went on, "what was the name on the book that gave you your monstrous idea?"



He corrected her, but still gently: "My brilliant idea? It was 'Hedda Gabler,' by Henrik Ibsen. You remember the dramatic scene where she burns the manuscript?"

"And Lucy Nutt—consented? You persuaded her, and she really did it? It's incredible! That timid, shy, negative, dowdy little wisp of a creature——"

"They are the boldest and the bravest at a crisis. Yes, she waited, on my advice, until he was at work on the last chapter, and then, while he was arrogantly receiving a vote of thanks for presiding so graciously at the centenary of the First Edition Club, she quietly walked into his study and, giving thanks to Providence that he did not believe in secretaries and typewriters, and dictation and carbon copies, and other diabolic inventions of a hustling generation, she burnt 'The Heart of a Rose,' Pauline, she burnt every petal of it! And then she allowed the last flaming page of it to fall on to the hearthrug. And then, just as quietly, she walked out of his study again. Twenty minutes later she said 'Fire Brigade' down the telephone—which is the other thing I have always longed to do on dull evenings."

"The *other* thing?" asked Pauline most indiscreetly. Pauline's wits were not at their nimblest that drowsy afternoon of May, or she would not have given Dick the chance to go as far as he did in his next few speeches. For Richard Spurnville Carew was that dangerous kind of philanderer who believes every time that he is indeed in earnest and in love.

"Fourthly," Pauline interrupted him, finding safety in a return to the Nutts.

"There hasn't been a thirdly!"

"I *said* thirdly! What will happen if Septimus ever finds out that poor Lucy deliberately burnt his masterpiece?"

"I can answer you that, my dear, in three brief phrases: He knows. She told him at once. I told her to."

Pauline cried out in amazement: "Didn't he—*rage*?"

"He forgave her. Oh, and so magnanimously and tenderly! He took her in his arms and he forgave her. My hat, and wasn't he bucked!"

"Wasn't *she* bucked, you mean?"

"No, he! That she had burnt the mess. He was bound to realise, deep in his secret soul, under all the pomp and the strutting, that it *was* a mess, and not up to his former magnificent standard. There was no doubt but that he found it jolly difficult, and even,

if truth be told, a bit of a nuisance, to have to write again, doggedly and steadily, to please his clamorous, exacting public; to write every day from nine till one and from five to half-past seven, dreading the ultimate publication. Lucy got him out of it all, and without damaging his prestige in the slightest. He must have been enormously grateful to Lucy. And then Lucy admitted that she had destroyed his MS. solely out of her jealous and possessive love for him, which would suffer no rivals, not even in Art. That is in itself a gratifying circumstance. And it's great fun being magnanimous and forgiving your wife. My touch on the whole Nutt affair has been absolutely marvellous, Pauline. Admit it! How delicately, how subtly, and yet, when need arose, how boldly I handled the situation! How well I extricated them from it!"

"Who put them in? Little Tommy Thin!" Pauline reminded him, ruthlessly cutting short his swagger. "And who pulled them out? Little Tommy Stout! But it was the same old Tommy each time!" She was feeling not quite pleased with the Happy Meddler, for the Septimus Nutts, a perfectly contented pair, had decided to retire into the enjoyment of an endless honeymoon—at Penvorrown. The author of "The Missing Chord" was again entirely dependent for all his spiritual sustenance upon his wife; but his old embittered grouse against the universe for not appreciating him had quite melted away, and he was still fully capable of patronising, kindly but firmly, a minor novelist like Pauline Wilmore.

"I'm selling my darling cottage," she remarked now, turning her head for a regretful glimpse of the thatched roof which just showed in a dip of the hill behind them. "What a smashing and a crashing you bring with you, Dick, bumping about in people's lives! Septimus Nutt was just, and only just, bearable when you first came down to Penvorrown, but now——" An expressive gesture completed her plaint.

And the Happy Meddler bowed a repentant head. "Can't I do anything, Pauline?"

"No!"—very, very quickly. "Please don't do anything, Dick. Nothing at all. Keep as still as you can, without moving—without *thinking*, if possible. Then we'd all feel safer!"

"If you were to marry me, Pauline——" he suggested in all humility, and because he could not help himself. Surely he must have adored Pauline always? Well, anyway, for



years. How long ago had he noticed that her skin was the texture of white geranium?

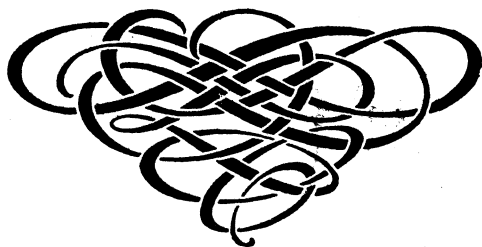
"If you were to marry me, Pauline, we might be as happy as—the Nutts!"

"And supposing you were to burn the MS. of my latest book? Oh, yes, you might have contracted the habit by now, you know! Don't hit the granite quite so hard, Dick darling! It *did* occur to you as a good solution of any stray misunderstanding,

didn't it? And that habit in an author's husband——" She shook her golden head mournfully, but her eyes were a dance of sheer mischief. "No, Dick, you've lost me. I can't risk it. I'm not magnanimous, you see, like Mr. Septimus Nutt."

Who, by the way, was at that moment to be seen coming down the hill. He caught sight of Pauline and her rejected suitor, and began to raise his hat.

*A further episode from the career of "The Happy Meddler" will appear in the next number.*



## PAN'S PIPER.

**A** LILTING tumble of dancing notes  
That Pan might have played to his browsing goats  
And dryads run to greet.

Like a will-o'-the-wisp of teasing sound  
It called, now loud, now traffic-drowned,  
Through the clattering street,

To race with the breeze over shining sand  
To the sea that lies like a gleaming band  
Round the edge of the world,  
To stray in the dusk by a woodland pool,  
When shadows rise as the colourful  
Flags of sunset are furled.

A broken man in a two-wheeled chair  
Mocked at the Fates with that lilting air  
Learned from the Faery Clan.  
And "over the hills and far away"  
The beckoning notes came strong and gay  
Straight from the pipes of Pan.

AGNES-MARY LAWRENCE.



"‘You will marry me, won't you?’ he asked presently."

# MILLICENT'S MONEY

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

"SHE'S back, then," said old Mrs. Rumbold.  
"Yes, I hear they arrived last night, Alice."

"Well, now's your chance, Master Bobby." The old woman smiled meaningly, screwed up her eyes, and nodded twice. "You make the most of it, Master Bobby, my dear. If she's any eyes at all for a fine gentleman, there isn't your match in the country that I've ever seen. You may be poor, but she's in no need of money, and there aren't so many of the real gentry left."

Robert Mallins smiled a little complacently. He was a vain man, and, while he preferred subtler forms of flattery, he could put up with a great deal of the unvarnished sort from his old nurse. He knew that she adored him, and that every word she uttered was sincere.

"You're a wicked old schemer, Alice," he said indulgently, closing the garden gate as a hint that he was not prepared to stand there and gossip indefinitely.

"Oh, yes, I am! I'm a wicked old schemer! I'd scheme anything for my Master Bobby. Go in and win. Good luck to you, Master Bobby, my dear, and God bless you."

The smile lingered on Mallins's face as he walked up the garden path to his cottage

door. Old Alice had certainly put an idea into his head; not a feasible, practicable idea, to be sure, but a romantic thought which it was pleasant to toy with. He had a romantic streak in him which would not let him contemplate the thought of a loveless marriage, but how pleasant it would be to fall in love with an heiress!

He walked through the hall and into the studio beyond. On the way he caught sight of himself in a glass and lingered a moment. Yes, he wasn't at all a bad-looking fellow; he couldn't help knowing that. And if Millicent had a romantic temperament—After all, they were equals in birth and breeding; they were even distant kinsfolk. Only twenty years since the Mallinses and the Vyatts, near neighbours, had been equal powers in the land. Why shouldn't old Alice's dream come true? The only reason against it seemed to be that such things happened so often in books. It was a subject for narrative poetry, such as Tennyson or Mrs. Browning might have handled. He went on, humming a tune. After all, why shouldn't the thing happen? There was plenty of romance still in the world, if one only searched for it.

The history of Robert Mallins was briefly this. He had been born at Selsley Park,

whose lands touched the Vyatt estate on the south side. He had arrived in the world at a time when many houses, the House of Mallins among them, were fast declining. "The last sad squires" were already "riding slowly towards the sea." The end had come in 1914 with the death of Mallins's father. It only remained for Mallins himself to get rid of the heavily encumbered estate. There was just enough saved out of the wreck to provide him with a modest income.

The man had a cat-like affection for that obscure corner of the earth. He returned there on his release from the Army, and bought a cottage. Previously he had flirted with Art, and now wooed that mysterious lady seriously, partly because he needed something to do, and partly because he needed to add to his slender means.

Vyatt Hall had been in the hands of caretakers for years. Old Squire Vyatt had died in 1910, leaving an only daughter, his sole heiress, who had been whisked away by relatives and brought up among a family of cousins. Now, at twenty-five—yes, he made her out to be that—she had returned with her aunt, old Lady Wilvington, to take up the reins of management and enjoy the untrammelled life of a millionairess. For the Vyatts had been a careful family, and the great brewery in the county town was one of the monuments of their thrift and foresight.

Mallins stroked his chin and considered. He had played with Millicent as a child. That seemed romantic enough. She could not have forgotten an old friend and neighbour. Truth to tell, he had not liked her very much; she had seemed to him a wilful and selfish little beast. But he was willing to overlook that. Time might have improved her. She might have grown lovable.

Then he tried to shake his mind clear of thoughts which seemed to be forging too far ahead. "Confound old Alice," he muttered, "for putting such ideas into my mind!"

But the ideas lingered.

## II.

THE lady of the manor did not show herself in the village. Vyatt Hall, approached by an avenue nearly a mile long, enjoyed profound seclusion. A week went by, and only a few village worthies claimed to have had a glimpse of her in a great closed-in car.

And then, one sunny morning, Mallins, rambling through a fringe of the woods on the Vyatt estate, came face to face with a little dark-haired, dark-eyed lady, who walked accompanied by two bull-terriers.

Millicent had been dark and rather small. At the first sight of her his heart jumped. He scarcely doubted who she was, but he had scarcely expected to find her beautiful. There was no light of recognition in her eyes—only one demure glance before the lashes fell. And there came upon him a dull sensation of disappointment and an impulse to accost her and say: "Isn't it Miss Vyatt? And have you really forgotten an old friend?"

It was the dogs which made them acquainted. One of them, acutely conscious of his duties as chaperon, went up to Mallins, sniffed distrustfully at his legs, and growled. This brought the other one to share the investigation, and the girl turned promptly and called to them.

"They're quite all right," she said to Mallins.

"I wasn't nervous, thank you." He lifted his hat. "They must have known I was trespassing. Perhaps I should apologise. Now that the house is occupied, I must break myself of the habit of walking through these woods."

"You needn't apologise to me," said the girl, "and I don't suppose Miss Vyatt minds in the least."

This puzzled him. So she wasn't Millicent, after all.

"I don't think she'd object," he said, "seeing that we used to be friends."

"Oh, really?"

"My name is Mallins."

The girl smiled with a sudden show of interest. "Oh, really? I have heard her speak of you."

"Not unkindly, I hope. It's many years since I saw her. May I ask—are you a friend of hers?"

The girl hesitated. "In a sense—yes. I am staying with her. Actually I am her companion. That is to say, I share the privilege with Lady Wilvington. Can I take a message, Mr. Mallins?"

He hesitated. "May I walk a little way with you, if you don't mind, and the dogs will let me?"

The girl smiled. "I don't mind at all," she said, "and the dogs seem to want to be friendly now. Will it take you long to compose a message, then? Why not call and deliver it in person?"

Mallins shook his head. "I don't think I shall burden you with a message," he said. "If Miss Vyatt chooses to forget an old friend——"

A troubled look came into the girl's eyes. "Millicent isn't a bit like that," she said. "You see, she—we've only been here a week, and there has been a terrible number of things to look after. And she's spoken awfully nicely of you. From what she said, you used to lead her into all sorts of mischief."

"You know all about me, then?" he asked with a twinkle.

"Millicent has her reminiscent moods."

He laughed. "That isn't fair. You know all about me, and I know nothing about you—not even your name."

"Promptly supplied. My name is Hills. I was at a finishing school with Millicent."

"Well, Miss Hills, since you've all been so busy, I suppose I must forgive her. But I am still in the village, to be taken notice of when her majesty pleases. What is she like now?"

"Very much the same as ever, I believe."

"In that case," he laughed, "you must find her rather a handful."

The girl echoed his laugh. "Oh, she's grown up, naturally. I know what you're thinking of. I've heard all about her escapades with you—even the occasion when you were leaning over the pigsty, and she pushed you——"

"Good Heavens, did she even tell you that?"

"And the time you made her climb a tree, and she couldn't get down again."

He smiled reminiscently. "It strikes me," he said, "that you know much more about me than you ought to know."

She turned and looked steadily into his eyes. "I know enough about you to feel friendly," she said. "You see, we are brother and sister in misfortune."

"That's splendid! Sorry! I mean—how?"

"We've both seen—changes. I am beginning to feel like the typical seaside lodging-house keeper who tells everybody that she has seen better days. I have, and so have you. The War ruined my father. You are now living in a cottage, and I'm a paid companion."

He regarded her curiously. The germ of a thought was already active in his mind.

"And," she added, "I've heard so much about you from Millicent that I feel already that I know you, and can tell you that."

He murmured something absently, while his thoughts went soaring. The germ had become a definite idea. His heart began to beat rapidly with elation. The girl beside him did not look twenty-five, but ages are sometimes difficult to guess. And Millicent, grown up, might easily have become beautiful, like this girl who called herself Miss Hills.

He jogged his memory for a clearer vision of the girl he had known thirteen years before, but the picture of Millicent, aged twelve, remained misty. But the way this girl was looking at him, her sudden friendliness, her knowledge of him, all lent weight to his suspicion. In another moment he was sure. He was sure that the girl beside him was Millicent herself—Millicent pretending to be her own companion.

He laughed to himself. It had all become suddenly, definitely plain. Millicent had the romantic temperament, and had decided to indulge it. She was playing at being the poor companion instead of the heiress, either out of sheer mischief or because she cherished a romantic regard for her old playmate and wanted to be "loved for herself alone." She had simply borrowed an idea that was as old as the hills, a story upon which writers have been ringing the changes for three hundred years, and translated it into real life.

Yes, that was it. Every moment made it plainer. Beautiful heiress visits scene of her early youth. Comes face to face with companion of her childhood. Romantic situation! "Will he love me for myself if I pretend to be little Miss Nobody?" Becomes little Miss Nobody on the spur of the moment.

But Mallins was conscious that in penetrating her disguise he was violating the canons of this sort of romance. The hero ought to love little Miss Nobody, woo her and win her, and afterwards be astounded to discover that she is really little Miss Somebody with forty thousand a year. And, with a little stab of the conscience and a sensation of meanness, he determined to play the part of the honest dolt who is always the hero of that type of story.

The man was not altogether mean. If he had not been attracted to the girl, he would have made no plans. Her money was desirable, of course, but here was a girl who was eminently lovable. And, after all, few men offered a romantic rôle would refuse to play it. So Mallins made up his mind.

They walked together for nearly a mile,

and parted at the edge of the woods. Meanwhile he had contrived to tell her a good deal about himself.

"Oh, do you paint?" she exclaimed, delighted. "How lovely! May I please come and see some of your pictures?"

"Certainly," he laughed, "if they won't bore you."

"They won't. And I shall come, you'll see."

He walked home feeling that he had every right to be extremely satisfied.

### III.

SHE kept her word. Two afternoons later, on his return from posting a letter, he found her in his studio. Martha, his old house-keeper, had let her in during his absence.

Gladys—she had told him that was her Christian name—sat on a high chair, swinging her little grey-shod feet and humming an air. She broke off to jump down and wave a hand to him.

"You see," she said, "Miss Mahomed has come to see Mr. Mountain."

"Splendid! But I won't have the Miss Mahomed. The Mountains and the little Hills sounds better."

She burst out laughing. "That's rather bright of you. I've been looking at your pictures already. I love that one on the easel. I think it's awfully jolly."

"I hope it will be—when it's finished."

"Isn't it? That shows how much I know. I thought it was—what do you call it?—impressionistic. But I like all of them here. I think you're frightfully clever."

Mallins uttered a sigh. "That shows," he said, "how little you know about art."

"I know what I like."

"People who know nothing about pictures always say that."

She uttered a little unforced laugh. "You're not very gracious, are you?" she complained. "Do you snub everybody who says nice things to you?"

"It's such an unusual occurrence," Mallins returned, "that I hardly know how to deal with such a situation."



"Mallins, rambling through a fringe of the woods on the Vyatt estate, came face to face

"But you are clever, aren't you?" she insisted almost pleadingly.

"The committee at the Academy seem to have agreed that I'm not."

"O., they're prejudiced!"

"I hope you are, too—in my favour. If you like my water-colours, Gladys, it was worth while to have painted them."

She nodded approvingly.

"That's better. Your manners are improving."

"There was room," he said sadly.

"There's still room. A little later I hope you are going to be polite enough to offer me some tea."

"Of course I am. It's always done at private shows, isn't it? You haven't given me much time, but I'll order it now."

Yes, he found her very lovable. There was some subtle quality in her that he had never found in any other woman. He liked the way that she crossed swords with him

in a friendly duel of words. And she was a consummate actress, playing her part to admiration, pretending that they were comrades in misfortune, flotsam of a wrecked squirarchy. It was not without vanity that he reflected that he was playing his part just as well.

Later, when she sat sipping tea in the one



with a little dark-haired, dark-eyed lady, who walked accompanied by two bull-terriers."

armchair of which the studio could boast, she lent the room an air of completeness which it had never had before. It seemed so natural and right for her to be there. He had no illusions about love in a cottage, but he realised that if she were really the poor girl she pretended to be, it would not retard the speed with which he was falling in love with her.

"I shall go and see the places you have painted," she said presently. "It will give me an object for my morning walks."

"Must you take them alone?" he asked.

"I don't. Tim and Jim come with me."

"The bull-terriers? Ah, you're well off! I haven't any Tim and Jim to take with me. Won't you take pity on a lonely man?"

She seemed to consider. "I might."

"Ah, that means you will. Will you meet me in the copse where I met you two days ago? To-morrow? At half-past ten?"

"Yes, if——"

"If what?"

"If you'll promise not to tell Millicent when you meet her."

"There seems to be no immediate danger of my meeting Millicent."

"Oh, but you will! I shall tell her I've met you, but I don't want her to know that I've been here, or been for walks with you."

Mallins laughed to himself. "If you wish it, strict secrecy shall be preserved," he said. "But why?"

"Oh, Millicent mightn't like it. She's very prim and proper, you know."

"Is she? Then she *has* changed."

"And," said the girl, with a little mocking laugh, "she might be jealous!"

He laughed, too, but he was thinking: "You little monkey, you! And what an actress!"

#### IV.

HE met her in the copse next morning and several mornings after. Tim and Jim soon came to recognise him as an old friend. Their friendship had begun rapidly enough; it grew like a plant under the cloak of a conjuror.

Mallins found himself thinking less and less about her money. It soon came to matter nothing to him. It was she he wanted—little Millicent, or Gladys, as he had to call her. They fell in love as naturally as two robins in the spring of the year.

There came a morning when they stood to say good-bye on the edge of the wood in

dappled shade and sunlight. Mallins knew that he had to speak, but found himself bereft of words. Her hand lingered in his. He found himself holding it stupidly, with eyes bent down. Then suddenly he raised them to her face.

He read there all that he wished to know, and drew her into his arms. She uttered a little sigh, slipped her arms around his neck and gave him her lips.

"I love you!" he whispered, and she whispered back, "I love *you*!" It was a long minute before either could say more. It seemed to both of them that the birds in the trees sang for them and them only.

"You will marry me, won't you?" he asked presently.

She smiled at him, but he saw that her eyes were moist. "Poor old Bob!" she whispered. "Poor enough as he is, and now he wants to burden himself with a wife!"

"We shall manage somehow. I'll live to make you happy. Could you—could you stand the cottage?"

"I shall love it," she answered, "because of you."

He was too happy to think. It was not until he was alone and half-way home that his conscience rose and accused him. He ought to have told her then and there that he knew who she was, that he had penetrated her disguise from the first, and let her think—if she chose—that it was her money which attracted him. Several times he called himself a cad, and determined that the farce must end. Probably she intended to end it immediately herself, but he must take the first step—deal honestly with her because he loved her honestly.

That afternoon a footman from Vyatt Hall arrived on a bicycle with a note for Mallins. The latter read it in the studio while the man waited for an answer outside. It ran as follows—

"MY DEAR BOBBY,

"—if you still don't mind being called by your Christian name—you must think me terribly unkind for having been back so long without trying to get a glimpse of you. But I have found a tremendous amount to do, and, after all, lone spinsters mustn't call on bachelors. However, if you can forgive me, will you come over to dinner to-night, and we can have a talk about old times. It will be quite a family party—just Aunt Hetty (Wilvington)—member her?—and my companion Miss Hills—who met you out walking once—and me.

"Do come if you can, and if you can't, name a day."

"Your friend,

"MILLICENT VYATT."

Mallins smiled to himself, and went on smiling while he scribbled a reply to the effect that he would be pleased to come. Now was the time for Millicent dramatically to reveal herself. It was all working out just as in the old threadbare stories. It remained for him to act first, to walk straight up to the real Millicent and address her by name. She could not think the worst of him. A real fortune-hunter would never have confessed.

He presented himself at the Hall at twenty minutes to eight, handed over his hat and coat, and followed a servant to a door which he recognised as that of the smaller drawing-room. He saw it flung open and heard himself announced. A moment later he was in the room.

Three ladies were sitting close to the fireplace. The oldest one, white-haired, was obviously Lady Wilington, although he had only a vague memory of her. There was an undersized little creature, with black bobbed hair and pince-nez, and there was the girl to whom he had become affianced only a few hours since.

It was she whom he approached. He went straight up to her, a smile on his lips and a humorous light in his eyes.

"How jolly to meet you again after all these years!" he said, a slyly jesting note in his voice.

Instantly he saw that something was wrong. The smile faded from her face. She stared at him blankly, and then there stole into her eyes a look which hurt him.

"Wrong again, Bob! Why, I thought you two knew each other!"

It was the squat little person with the glasses and the bobbed hair who spoke. Her smile was mystified, but perfectly friendly.

"How are you, after all this time?" she added warmly.

He turned and looked at her. Yes, she was Millicent right enough! The picture of Millicent the child grew plain again in his memory. Yes, she was certainly Millicent. And the other was—just Gladys Hills, just the paid companion she had announced herself to be.

So he loved Nerissa, after all, and not Portia. He stood half dazed at realising the monstrous error he had made. And Gladys

—what did Gladys think of him? Would she realise the significance of the ghastly mistake he had made?

"My eyes," he stammered, "in this light—"

"It is rather dim and religious, isn't it?" said Millicent—the real Millicent—amiably. "Still, I'm flattered at being mistaken for Gladys. Aunt Hetty, you remember Bob Mallins, don't you?"

He found himself bowing to the elderly lady. Presently he sat down and forced himself to converse with Millicent, although his mind was elsewhere and his gaze continually sought Gladys. But her face was pale and set, and not a glance would she throw in his direction. Yes, she knew—*she knew!*

Mallins endured mental tortures all through dinner. He could hardly get a word from Gladys, who still wore that strained, hurt look. He carried on a desultory conversation with Millicent and her aunt, but answered all questions absently, to the point of rudeness. He left as soon afterwards as common courtesy allowed, and his hostess was not sorry at his departure.

"Bob's grown up very dull," she remarked, after he had gone. "Very dull, and no manners."

Mallins slept little that night. He could think of nothing to say to Gladys when they met again—if they did meet. Perhaps she would ignore him, keep out of his way. After all, from her point of view, it was no more than he deserved. He thought of writing, but once more he could find nothing to say.

But Gladys did not ignore him. An hour after breakfast she was ushered into his studio. He coloured guiltily, but tried to approach her as if nothing had happened. She held him off with a look and a gesture.

"I want to say something," she remarked coldly. "Did you really think that I was Millicent last night?"

He answered dully: "Yes."

"Don't misunderstand me. I want to know if you thought I was Millicent all the time we were meeting, and when—when you asked me to marry you?"

"Yes," he answered in the same tone of a guilty man confessing.

"I don't—don't understand. Why should Millicent pretend to be me?"

"She might have done it for—for fun. I thought you were Millicent all the time."

"And when you asked me to marry you, you thought you were asking a wealthy girl,



and you thought you were giving her an impression that you were an honest man honestly in love?"

The words cut into him like the lash of a whip.

"Listen, Gladys. I meant to confess what I thought I knew. That's why I went straight up to you last night before you could speak."

"You didn't confess before you—spoke to me yesterday morning. It must be trying to find yourself engaged to a penniless girl! But I congratulate you—you are released."

"Gladys," he pleaded "listen! I love you!"

"You mean you love Millicent's money?"

"Oh, don't! Won't you hear me? At first the money did attract me. But—but I came to love you so much that I didn't care a straw whether you had twopence or not. I don't care now. I only know that

I love you. Do you think that an adventurer, such as you make me out to be, would contemplate marrying and living on in this hovel? And I want you to marry me, Gladys, and share the little I've got."

She lowered her gaze from his face. "I don't respect you," she said in a low voice.

"I'm sorry," he muttered thickly.

Then Gladys took two steps towards him. "I don't respect you—yet, but I do love you. And—and if you prove to be the— the old darling I thought you were, I shall respect you again, shan't I?"

Next moment he had swept her off her feet into his arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mallins and his wife are quite poor, but very happy. I don't think he regrets Millicent's money in the least. And Gladys perhaps loves him the better for having few illusions about him.

## EPHING FOREST.

**I**N Epping's glades wild roses bloom  
Beneath the towering beeches,  
Where through the copse's mystic gloom  
A ray of sunlight reaches.

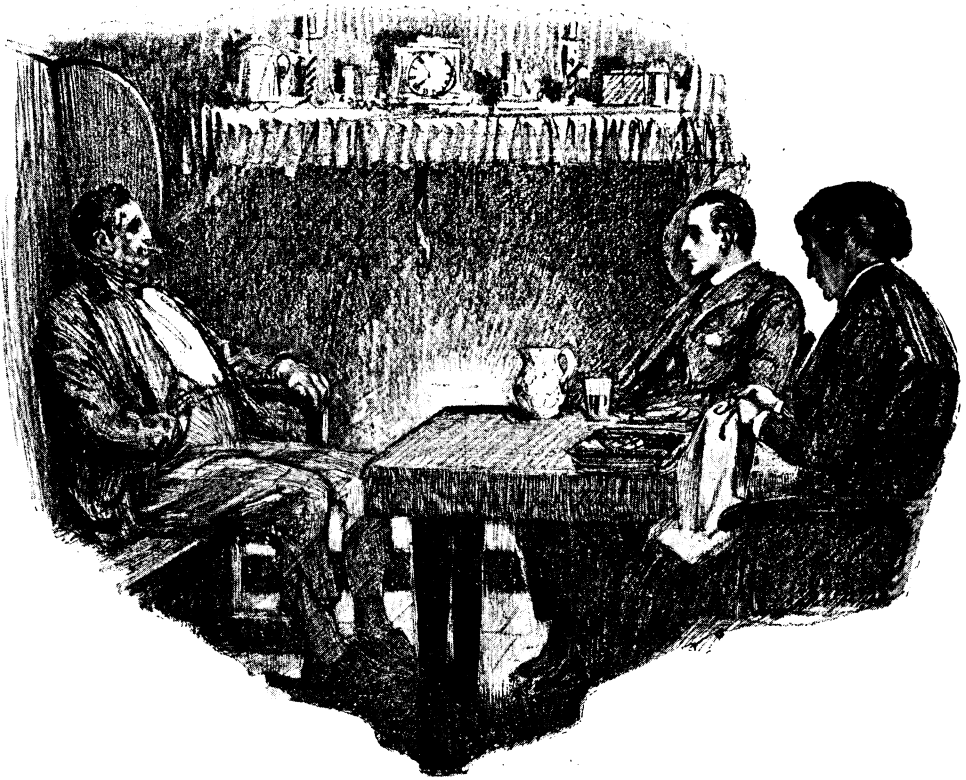
**O**n Connaught's Water lilies float,  
Wake Valley's full of singing;  
And Fairmead hears the blackbird's note;  
The thrush's song is ringing.

**I**n High Beech Woods, where April's been,  
She's left her dainty traces:  
The spreading branches burgeon green  
Where birches show their graces

**A**t Chigwell now each mating rook  
Makes a delightful clamour;  
In every hedgerow's hawthorn nook  
There calls a yellow-hammer.

**T**he forest sounds, the forest sights,  
The swirl of Roding's river,  
The scent of April's misty nights,  
Live in my heart for ever.

BRIAN HILL.



"'Reckon pixies must have been hard to please in those days, Mr. Pounceford. They got a sight more cream put out for them, than they ever get now.'"

# PIXY-LED

By PHILIP BURTON

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

COLIN PONCEFORD sat in the dining-room of Port Treloa Farm with a glass of cider and a plate of cakes beside him. Opposite him, on the other side of the open hearth, Harry Plynt, the farmer, was sitting. Plynt was a young, broad-shouldered man with a ruddy complexion tanned to a glowing brown, black hair, black eyes, and a Cornishman's hooked nose. He sprawled at his ease in his old armchair, tired and good-humoured after carrying hay in the sun, sucked at his pipe, and lazily drawled his words through the smoke. Watching Pounceford tap his pipe on the hearth, he felt in the pocket of his coat and produced a pouch. "Have some tobacco," he said. "'Tis the sort you were saying you liked."

Mrs. Plynt looked up from her sewing under the lamp on the long oak table. "Maybe," she said, "he'd rather have another cake." They were a hospitable pair.

Pounceford had formed the habit, in the last few weeks, of spending no small proportion of his evenings in the cool, shadowy, black-raftered dining-room of Port Treloa. One could feel lonely down at the end of the orchard, where his tent was pitched.

He had come to Penhallow some three months ago, bringing with him a tent, a typewriter, and such small change as the journey from London had left from a five-pound note. Since then he had lived penuriously, but not unhappily, his fortunes fluctuating in the manner usually and

correctly associated with obscure and struggling authorship. For brief but glorious periods his catering was regulated only by the limitations of his Primus stove; at other times, when he was luckier as an angler than an author, he feasted royally on pollack; and for the rest—the disproportionately great remainder—he fed on eggs and milk and bread-and-butter, bought from the farm and paid for when he had the money. There were occasions when he felt that he was tired of eggs and milk and bread-and-butter.

Now, as he sat there, sipping the cider that came from the trees about his tent, and munching the cakes that Mrs. Plynt could make so excellently, he fell to watching the moon behind the trees that hid Penhallow church, and he thought: "Anyone might get sick of a run of rejected stories and new-laid eggs, but no one could very well get sick of the place itself. If only Jill were here. . . ."

He had been engaged to Jill Weldon for two of the three years through which he had struggled towards prosperity in London; and it was because he had seemed to be getting no nearer to his goal, but only marking time at the point where he could afford to pay for his shabby digs., and his week-end fare to the Weldons' place in Godalming, that he had torn himself loose and come to Cornwall. After a week in Penhallow he had already decided upon the wording of the wire that should bring Jill down from Godalming. There was a furnished cottage across the bay above the Cove. One only needed a little luck. There was something about the place that made it impossible to be otherwise than optimistic. And there was a novel of his still going the rounds of the publishers.

Plynt took the pipe from his mouth and stretched his tired limbs and smiled. "Been troubled at all with they bullocks again, down to your tent?" he asked.

Pounceford grinned. "They are a bit trying at times," he admitted. "They wait till I'm on the point of going to sleep, and then come and scratch themselves against the guy ropes. The result is rather alarming, till you realise what's going on. If you get up and talk to them in the way they understand, they depart at the gallop—and so does the tent. If you don't, they go on scratching. Once or twice I've come pretty near to putting a really devastating ill-wish on them."

"Don't 'ee do that," said Harry Plynt,

his black eyes twinkling. "For the dear life's sake, not that! We had," he added more seriously, "more than our share of trouble back-along." He was alluding, Pounceford knew, to the story of the very strange old woman whom they had as a servant several years ago. She had a pet black cat that one night ended miserably in a rabbit trap; and somehow, after that, the livestock at Port Treloa, from the smallest chick to the biggest steer, refused to thrive as long as she was in the house.

Pounceford had listened to many tales in the dining-room of Port Treloa, while he watched the shadow creep from the yard-thick grey stone wall across what once had been a monastery garden, and saw the southern sky change from blue to a mackerel-green behind the churchyard trees. Listening thus to the farmer's voice, with its pleasant, lazy, up-and-down Cornish lilt, he sometimes found himself strangely credulous. Plynt was an excellent hand at spinning a yarn, and at first, when Pounceford was still a stranger at the farm, would recount undying jokes against his neighbours, or, with a fine impartiality, against himself. He knew, it seemed to Pounceford, of everything that had been done or said within Penhallow parish for at least three generations. It was when he and Mrs. Plynt had weighed their visitor in the balance, had found him free from patronising "up-country" airs, that Plynt began to talk of ancient customs and beliefs, queer happenings in past days and in his own. Pounceford had listened, delighted and inwardly making notes, to tales of witches and pixies, of spells and ill-wishes and omens evil and good; had found himself accepting their truth as a matter of course, till he had to pull himself up, tell himself that things of that sort didn't happen.

Plynt had a manner that subtly engendered conviction unawares. It was so evident he himself believed implicitly much of what he told; and yet he was ready enough to treat as a joke what altogether passed belief, to end with a laughing reference to some practical experience of the mysterious. It was hard to convict this big, shrewd, self-reliant man, when he recounted curious happenings to his beasts, of mixing ignorant superstition with his seemingly boundless store of farming knowledge. One's ideas concerning the line that divided an interest in the occult from peasant superstition would seem to change, thought Pounceford, in Penhallow.

He could never determine whether or no Plynt really believed the tale of his grandfather's ill-wished pigs. Certainly neither Plynt nor his wife had kept a straight face when he came to the part where the pigs—the stranger who'd been refused the sale of one had openly wished them ill for all to hear—lined up in the sty and stood with their hind legs up on the wall and their snouts to the ground, as stiff as so many sentries. But the rest of the story—that had carried the stamp of truth. Plynt had told how his mother, a girl of ten at the time, had been hurried early to bed, had sat awake and listened to voices in the kitchen below, conscious of being shut out from the scene of great events. She had crept downstairs on the stroke of twelve, had tiptoed up to the open kitchen door, and there, in the glow of the driftwood fire, she had seen the group that gathered about the roasted bullock's heart and pierced the smoking flesh with pins, singing chants in a language she did not know. And the pigs, of course, were right enough in the morning.

Not all the stories dealt with the past and were told at second-hand. There was a neighbouring farmer's daughter, Plynt had said, who was bewitched not more than a year ago. She had offended a queer old woman down to Tregarth; and, be that as it might, she had suddenly fallen into a trance, and no one had heard her speak or seen her eat for six long months. She would lie in her bed as white and still as a corpse, and no matter what the doctors did, she would never speak and never move. Food that was left in her room would be gone, but nobody saw her eat it; and sometimes, when they were working in the yard, they would see her face, white and inhuman, at the window, and then they would run upstairs and burst into her room to find her lying there quiet and still as the dead, with the bedclothes not so much as ruffled. At last her father asked the address of the Witch ("There's only the one," said Plynt, "that's called the Witch") and took a journey—to see some bullocks in Devon. He told some friends, when he came back empty-handed, that the bullocks were not worth buying; and his daughter was running about within the week.

Pounceford, watching the moon through the trees outside, found that his mind was full of Plynt's stories and of the half-forgotten fairy lore of his childhood. He smiled as a memory came to him, and,

yielding to impulse, spoke his thoughts aloud. "I wonder," he said, "if people down here still put out cream for the pixies overnight?"

Plynt turned in his chair to look at his wife, and she put down her sewing and looked at him. They smiled at each other in silence, and Pounceford felt for a moment abashed, and inwardly cursed himself for his clumsiness. Mrs. Plynt dropped her head and went on with her work. "'Tis an old custom," she said.

Harry Plynt turned again to Pounceford and took the pipe from his mouth and laughed. "What I'm wondering," he said, "is who's been looking behind our dairy door?"

They were all three laughing now, Pounceford declaring his innocence, pleading he'd merely read about the custom somewhere, happened to think of it. "Reckon," said Plynt, resting his eyes on an oleograph on the opposite wall, "reckon that you'll be one of they who says it's a custom does more good to the cats than the pixies, eh, Mr. Pounceford? Don't know that we'd grudge a ratter like ours a drop of cream. So thin as a rake, that black one keeps. They say a ratter'll never grow fat." He paused, sucking at his pipe, and eyeing the brightly-coloured Teutonic idyll with a friendly contempt. "My great-grandfather," he said, "that was the first of us at Port Treloa, he had a workman tell him one of the cats had been seen at the cream they put out. 'Well, I'm blessed!' says the old man, but using different words, d'you see, for he was a terrible one to swear, by all accounts. 'The beggars,' he says, 'tisn't for they, then.' So he gets a dish and puts on top of the bowl, and lies a big stone on top of that. 'Pixies 'll have to work for their cream,' he says, 'if they don't want they devilling cats to have it.' Next morning he goes to the dairy, and there's the door, that was left ajar, wide open, and the dish smashed to pieces, and the stone flung across the yard, and the bowl upside down in a mess of cream. And when he lifts up the bowl an adder comes out from underneath—and it very nigh had great-grandfather. Reckon pixies must have been hard to please in those days, Mr. Pounceford. They got a sight more cream put out for them than they ever get now."

"I expect they did," said Pounceford "so they ought to be grateful nowadays. Look here, I'm going to do a bit for them

myself. It might bring luck to my tent, and, Heaven knows, I'm in need of luck. Can't run to cream, though. What d'you think, Mrs. Plynt—would they accept a little milk in the circumstances?"

"Maybe they wouldn't be above it these days," said she; and Harry, winking at her, warned him.

"Don't blame me if you find the cats are getting too friendly down to your tent. You never seemed to appreciate they bullocks, not as you might."

When Pounceford had picked his way in the moonlight down the steep orchard path, he kept his word. There was a white enamelled soap-dish he had cleaned that morning with a view to developing films, and this he filled with what was left of his day's supply of milk and left outside his tent.

The milk was gone in the morning, and on

every morning for a week; and Pounceford wondered whether the bullocks were secretly marvelling at his change of heart, or whether a cat at the farm was cynically blessing a visitor's credulity.

It was when exactly a week had passed since he had started to issue what he called the pixy ration that Pounceford stayed unusually late in the dining-room of Port Treloa. The moon had set at eleven, and he came outside to find that the night was dark. He stood between the grey stone



"And now it was full of lights and noise, glared

pillars of the porch and listened to Mrs. Plynt's quick footsteps dying away down the slate-flagged passage, and he felt for a moment lonely and strangely irresolute. The old walled garden was full of the thick, soft darkness that means a cloudy sky and a south-west wind. Even when his eyes had accustomed themselves to the change from the lamp-light within to the blackness without, he could make out little more than the shapeless masses of near-by trees against the sky.

After a time he felt his way to the door that opened into the yard, and he had to feel and peer and stumble round three sides of the latter before he found the orchard gate.

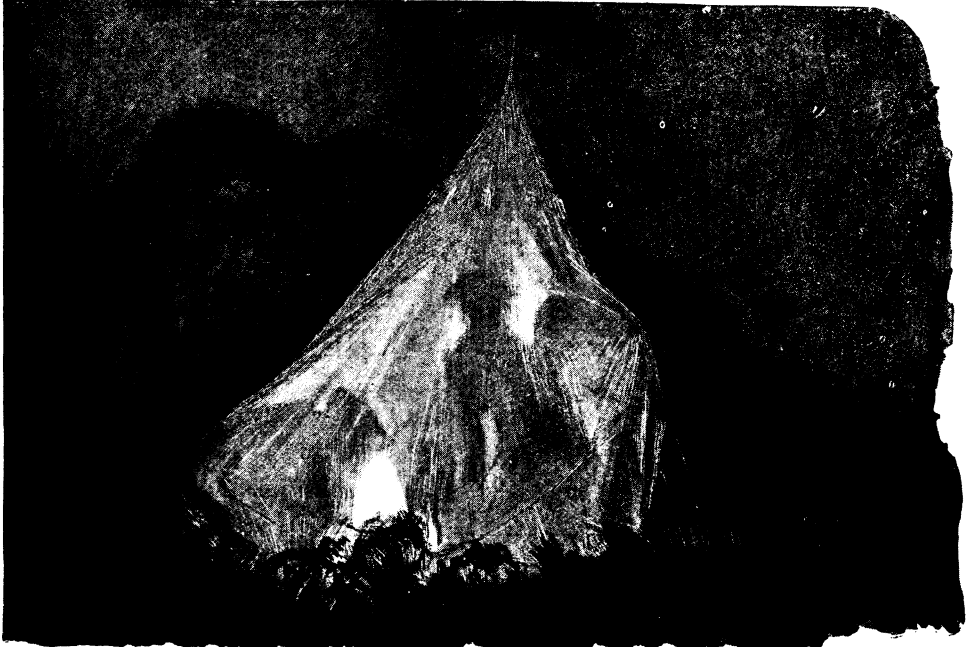
Once the gate was latched behind him he felt secure. He let himself step by cautious step down the precipitous slope, keeping the path by instinct rather than conscious effort, and he jumped, at the usual place, the stream that he only saw as a blacker rift in the darkness.

Now that the stream was crossed, the path sloped down less steeply, running beside the bank; and Pounceford quickened his pace, knowing that if he

kept to the stream he ran no risk of falling foul of the apple trees that rustled their scanty leaves and whispered, invisible in the night.

He had not gone far before he halted. In the last few yards he had felt the ground rise, and the swish and cling of the tall grass about his ankles told him he was off the path. He stood there, wrapped in darkness, and considered. If the ground was rising, he must have made to the left, towards the road; he need only face about and walk till he found the stream. For a time he listened, and thought he could hear the sound of running water; but the night was full of whispers, the rustle of leaves, and the ceaseless voice of the sea. It was hard to pick out the sound you wanted. He made his turn and went forward.

Pounceford had taken only three or four paces when he met the apple tree. If it had been some little distance from the point where he turned to find the stream, he might have been going warily, might have escaped more lightly. As it was, he walked straight into the thing, with his hands at his sides and his head thrust forward in the effort to see, and it suddenly locked him in its branches and thrust its gnarled and cruel fingers in his face, gouging, for a terrible



like a gin-palace, rocked and creaked and bulged."

moment, at his eyes. He flung himself back with his hands to his face and his heart coming up to choke him. He realised afterwards that he feared the tree would come after him out of the darkness, savage him. He laughed rather shakily, mopped his bruised face with a handkerchief, and made for the stream. Four orchard trees waylaid him before he found it, but now he was striking matches and groping with outstretched hands.

Twice he had thought he heard the stream close by, and the third time, doubting his ears, he came on it unexpectedly. His foot went forward into emptiness, and he fought for his balance, lost it, and fell. The stream was a full three feet below, and he dropped on hands and knees through a tunnel-roof of grass and weeds to the stony bed of it, bruised and cut himself and was soaked in ice-cold water. When he had climbed the bank again and was trying to follow the stream downhill, he was limping painfully, shivering every time the wind breathed against his dripping clothes.

Presently meadow grass gave place to brambles and undergrowth that twined about his legs. He turned to free himself, found himself plunging deeper. Now there were twigs that whipped his face, and all about him the leaves were whispering, rustling. Something leaped from under his feet and scuttled and squeaked, and suddenly panic arose on thrashing wings within him, and he struggled and gasped and fought his way through a thicket his memory told him was not there.

For a long time after that he pinned his faith to the fact that the road was above the orchard, and that any course that was set uphill must lead to it. And when his climbing brought him to unknown rocks and broken ground, he tried to steer by the fitful wind, and twice walked into the stream and once came perilously near his end in a quagmire withy-bed.

Now he seemed to have come to open ground, for the grass was short and springy underfoot, and the wind was scented with thyme. He was bruised and stiff and tired, and he sat down gratefully on the dew-soaked turf, and said: "I must think it out. I *can't* be lost." But his mind refused to piece together the puzzle of the path he had taken. He felt bewildered, dizzy, and afraid.

"You can't," he said to himself, "be frightened of nothing." He wished he had kept a match or two. He would have given much for a smoke,

A screech-owl whimpered overhead, and Pounceford jumped and looked into blackness over his shoulder. "Owls," he thought. "As if things weren't sufficiently trying! They ought to give some recognised warning before letting fly like that. Three short toots, or something——" The owl let fly again, splitting the night with its scream, and once more Pounceford jumped and flung a glance behind him. Then he found himself wishing he had not made a joke of it, had not offended the hostile night with provocative flippancy. He felt himself at the mercy of the night—the thick, unreal night that closed him in and sedulously whispered plans for his undoing. He was a stranger in the enemy's land—a faery land forlorn, his mind suggested.

Plynt's tales came crowding on his memory as he sat there, and he recalled the stories of travellers pixy-led, found wandering disconsolate in familiar fields at dawn. Pixy-led! "And the more you wander, the worse the trouble you meet. There's only one thing to do, they say." What was it Plynt had told him? Some silly charm? Crossing your fingers, or something? No. He put his hands to his aching head and tried to remember.

Pounceford gave a long sigh and rose unsteadily to his feet. He smiled to himself, and started methodically turning out his pockets. Each in turn he emptied, letting whatever it held fall down unheeded on to the ground at his feet. And when the linings of all were hanging out, and nothing remained, he stepped out in the direction in which he chanced to face.

Barely a minute later he was ambushed again, was winded and doubled up and gasping for breath. But his gasps were of triumph no less than of physical pain, for he knew that the solid beam he held in his hands, the beam that had caught him waist-high as he walked, was the topmost bar of the stile that connected the end of the orchard with Denver's field. On the other side of the stile was a plank across the stream, and thirty yards further, behind the bank that had saved it from many a westerly gale, was the tent.

Pounceford, gaining the top of the friendly bank, telling himself he was free at last from the clutches of that mad night, suffered a shock that seemed devised with an almost artistic cruelty. He stood there rigid and motionless, staring down on a tent that, like the familiar orchard, had betrayed him. All that tormented time he had

thought of it waiting for him, quiet and empty till he should win inside and bring it to life. He had pictured it looming at last, a dimly discernible whiteness, out of the dark. And now it was full of lights and noise, glared like a gin-palace, rocked and creaked and bulged. This, he thought, was the end of everything. One could only sit down and weep, and accept the fact that either the world or oneself was mad.

It was in the very moment of despair that his much-tried temper burst its bonds. He flung himself down the bank towards the tent. "I tell yer," a voice was saying inside, "'e'd 'ave it on 'im, so what's the blinkin' use——" The voice broke off. Pounceford was standing in the mouth of the tent, a wild, dishevelled figure, with blood on his face and his clothes in tatters about him. He glared at the three who crouched inside, and his rage was throttling him. "Here," he suddenly shouted, "you! What the——" They came at him silently, all the three together, and he felt a face crunch deliciously on his broken fist. Then the sand-bag caught him, and he dropped on his knees, and met it again.

The sun was high when Pounceford crawled from his tent and stood outside in his pyjamas, blinking eyes that the daylight hurt. Inside his head there seemed to be a ball of red-hot pain that rolled about when he moved and bumped against the sides of his skull. His mouth was very dry, and every part of him was bruised or stiff or cut. He groaned, and passed a trembling hand across a forehead that assumed an unusual shape.

"What on earth——" he whispered. And then, as one who, faced by conviction, clutches at incredulity: "Cider?" He took a sponge-bag from a branch of the elder tree that grew by his tent, and hobbled painfully down to the stream.

When the cold water had done its work, memory came back to life. "But I can't," said Pounceford, "have been bashed by thugs. It isn't possible in a place like this. When I got up off the floor and put myself to bed, I must have been dreaming about them. Plynt did say the cider was out of the brandy barrel. . . ." But when he pulled back the flap of the tent and saw how matters stood within, saw his clothes and books and papers scattered in mad confusion over the floor, and his boxes and tins upturned and empty, he knew it had been no dream, but actual fact.

After a time, as he sat on his canvas bed

with his head in his hands, he began to remember more. Those awful hours in the orchard! And then—there was something he'd done. He sat up and searched in the litter about his feet for the clothes he had worn the night before. Yes, the pockets *were* inside out.

Pounceford climbed stiffly over the stile and walked across Denver's field. Twenty or thirty yards away, where a ring of darker grass showed up against the side of the hill, something was glittering in the sun. It might, he thought, be the silver mount of his pipe.

It was, and scattered about on the turf near by were a pouch, some coins, an empty matchbox, a handkerchief, a knife and a leather wallet. He knelt to gather them up, and, when he had satisfied himself that nothing was missing, started an idle examination of the wallet's contents. There were some letters from Jill, a receipt or two, some hooks to gut, a tailor's bill, a threatening letter from Somerset House, and this, whatever it was.

He frowned for a moment at the slip of printed paper that the wind was fluttering. Then he laughed. Of course—the counter-foil of a ticket in the Levantine Lottery, that foreign affair so widely advertised nearly a year ago.

In a flush and reckless hour he had spent five shillings on a ticket, and completely forgotten about it. Well, the lottery must have been over long ago. He crumpled the paper in his fist and raised his arm, and he had all but thrown the counterfoil to the winds when he heard a voice.

"I tell yer," it said, "'e'd 'ave it on 'im, so what's the blinkin' use——"

Pounceford let his arm fall to his side. There couldn't, he hastily told himself, be anything in the idea that had come to him. There couldn't possibly. If he thought for a moment, he'd find the snag.

Say that he had won anything, wouldn't the lottery people have let him know? Of course they would. There was only the chance that his late landlady in Town was refusing to take the trouble to forward letters.

And the papers? Surely someone he knew would have seen the result in the papers, would have written and told him? No, by Jove, that was impossible, anyhow! He remembered now that you had to send a pet name for yourself, as well as your proper name and address—as for the Bengal Sweep. He had been Sheik,



because he had been thinking of getting a tent.

And that tore it. No one, however good or bad his reason for wanting to get the counterfoil, could have tracked him down to Penhallow by going about asking for Sheik. That was a snag that wrecked the idea completely. Doubtless the three who had laid him out were merely tramps surprised in the act of scrounging. He might have known it couldn't be true.

He rose to his feet and walked towards the stile, and as he went he unfolded the crumpled counterfoil and began to read the close-set type on the back. "The winners' pseudonyms and the numbers of winning tickets will be announced in *The Daily Sun* and other papers on April 25." Only two months ago, Pounceford thought. They took some time with these things. "A list of winners' names and addresses will be forwarded from the London depot, 780, Southampton Row, on receipt of stamps to the value of 3d." And a little farther on: "Winners' counterfoils must reach the depot of issue on or before July 31. Unclaimed prizes become the property of the organisers, the Levantine Development Trust."

Pounceford, forgetting his bruises, broke into a run. It *was* possible, he kept repeating to himself, as he struggled into raincoat and shoes, and made for the farm. There

would have been no letter to tell him of his luck; the clause concerning unclaimed prizes guaranteed that. And anyone, knowing the prize yet unclaimed, might have obtained his address, called at his digs, and followed him to Penhallow. And there was still a fortnight. . . .

Half an hour later Pounceford was facing Mrs. Plynt in the big farm kitchen. Piled on the bench from which he had risen were old, soiled copies of *The Daily Sun*, unearthed from cupboards and drawers. One copy—that of April 25—he held in his hand.

"Mrs. Plynt," he said, "where can I buy champagne?" She gazed at him in sympathetic distress. His face was pale and almost unnaturally calm, but there was in his eyes, no less than about his attire, a look of wildness that filled her with forebodings.

"Oh, Mr. Pounceford," she said, "whatever would you want to buy that for, then? Are you unwell at all? Let me run and fetch you a drop of brandy."

Pounceford's restraint broke down. He waved above his head a paper that headed a printed list with "Sheik," and a crumpled slip that was worth five thousand pounds. "Brandy?" he cried. "For *me*, Mrs. Plynt? Do I look as if I wanted stimulating? No, I want champagne—a case of champagne—whatever's the best champagne there is! I want to fill a bath with it and put it out for the pixies!"

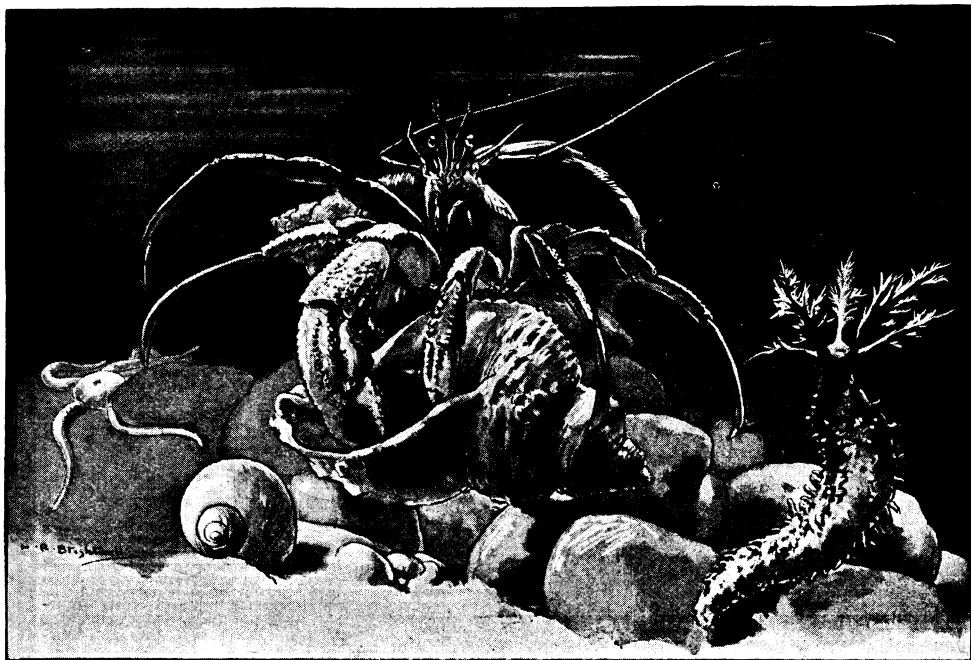
## A THAMES BACKWATER.

**M**Y boat swings free in this mid-England calm,  
A calm too deep for labour at the oar—  
Cuckoo and singing reed, an air like balm,  
A dulcet Thames above the last weir's roar.

Beyond those meadows, cool with afterglow,  
A thin smoke rises, and an ancient spire  
Basks in that mellow peace the English know,  
The ordered quiet of the English shire.

A tranquil haunt, yet down that dreamy tide,  
Dim-pinnacled with sunset, London waits—  
London, the Pool, the purlieus scattered wide  
Of earth's first city and her hundred gates.

ERIC CHILMAN.



"Probed its interior with claws and legs,"

# THIS DESIRABLE RESIDENCE . . .

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

*Illustrated by the Author*

THE Residence "went up" in a single night, without noise of hammering or obstruction to traffic. Originally intended for but a single tenant, it was less than a hundredth of an inch in length. Later it was destined to be the size of a man's fist, and give shelter to an infinity of creatures, permanent tenants, chance lodgers, and hangers-on of all kinds, living under the beneficent sway of their appointed landlord. But on the calm winter's night when the Desirable Residence first saw the light it was inhabited only by its builder—a tiny whelk. The shell, more transparent than a soap-bubble, and scarcely so strong, was one of some six hundred such residences, all gathered within the globular walls of a tough parchment-like envelope about the size of a pea. A thousand similar envelopes,

attached to each other so as to form a spherical mass the size of a grape-fruit, were anchored to an ironstone nodule wedged firmly in the mud five miles to seaward of the Dorset coast.

The shell, shaped more like a limpet's than a whelk's, whirled and gyrated with the five hundred and ninety-nine others in the parchment capsule, as its architect, builder, and landlord dictated. His tastes were eccentric, not to say peculiar. He looked less like a whelk than a butterfly, and had the table manners of a tiger. A blind and unresisting slave to Nature's laws, he fell upon his nearest neighbours and ate them, shells and all. By the end of March he was one of six survivors. His self-built house had grown with him, for as his size increased he put layer upon layer of a

patent cement upon the door-frame of his house, so that it spread forwards and outwards like the trumpet of a loud speaker. The whelk's body had developed a very markedly spiral twist, and he enlarged his house upon a twisted plan the better to accommodate him. As the days lengthened, other changes became manifest. The time was nearly ripe for him to sally forth and face the outer world. Soon he would have to face foes fiercer and stronger than his brethren. His crystal house, being ever reinforced with fresh layers of cement, soon lost its glassy appearance and became opaque. Being of a pliant disposition, the whelk could now, when danger threatened—and it usually was threatening—withdraw completely into his self-constructed fortress. Moreover, by doubling himself in half, so to speak, he could place the heel of his foot upon his chin and so effectually close the doorway. But a whelk's foot, though tough enough, is not impregnable. Upon the back of his heel the whelk constructed—always with the patent cement—a hard horny door behind which he might safely defy a fair percentage of his many foes. On the very day when the capsule, still containing six extremely turbulent young whelks, was ready to open, there pushed in a pair of shrimp-like atomies, who fought till one killed the other. The survivor fell upon the nearest whelk and, deliberately forcing a claw between the door and the lintel, strangled the owner, ate him out piecemeal, and then climbed backwards into the shell himself. That was our whelk's first acquaintance with one who was destined to become the final owner of "this Desirable Residence . . ."

But the time was not yet come. Our whelklet glided forth into the open, a creature sufficiently armoured to meet the challenge of the sea. His beady eyes, though evident enough, were scarcely of the best. To supplement them he carried on his head a pair of probes, or poles, horns, if you will, with which he explored the surrounding country. Above his back there waved aloft a great syphon pipe which carried the life-giving sea-water to his insatiable interior. There is no other word to describe his inner man. He blended the tiger and the hyena. The worm upon the hook, the rotten fish within the lobster-pot, the defunct ox thrown over the side of a passing cattle-boat, all fell to his rasp-like tongue, which served for jaws and fangs, a steel tape set with a hundred rows of saw-edged teeth that

marched on one behind the other, three abreast. The shellfish discarded by octopus or wrasse as too tough to be negotiable fell an easy prey before his regiment of teeth.

When carrion was scarce, the whelk applied himself to fresh meats. Seated upon an oyster or a brother whelk, the tongue came into play and drilled a neat circular hole through layer after layer of limy battlement until the interior was reached. Then the long tongue entered. No matter that teeth might break or be torn from their sockets, others were always growing to replace them. For a whelk's tongue is virtually an indestructible file. It filed to destruction many a sea-beast on rock ledge and sandy floor during the ten years of its builder's life. The Desirable Residence was desired by others greatly, often besieged, indeed, but never taken. Claws hammered on its horny door, unseen forces rolled it here and there, battered it against rocks, dragged it through mud and weedy jungles, but the house stood firm, and its owner prospered and waxed fat. He grew so fat and ponderous, discarding his one-time erratic scramble for a leisurely glide, that he one day attracted the fixed gaze of a mighty cod. The cod wasted no time in besieging the whelk's residence. He engulfed it, shell and all, and stowed it in his vast interior, along with other matters, including a ship's log and several score of lemon dabs. Time and the cod's digestion had their will eventually of the whelk, but the shell itself, though short of front-door and of velvet pile that once covered its walls, was still as strong as ever—too strong, indeed, for even a cod to assimilate, and so it was expelled. The Desirable Residence was "To Let."

Too often, in despondent mood, we are inclined to envy, for a moment, perhaps, the *apparent* care-free existence of the lower animals. The closer our acquaintance with them, however, the less our tendency to covet a life in the often-vaunted "wild." Few of our modern cares have not their counterparts in the great out-of-doors. The ills that flesh is heir to are not restricted to human society. Even the housing problem has its brightest aspects where humanity obtains. The woods, the prairies, mountains, rivers, lakes and sea bristle with invisible notice boards "Let," "Let," "Sold." "To Be Let" is a rarity indeed.

When the Desirable Residence came to rest, point down, in a fissure of the rocks, a million covetous eyes and exploratory



"A great gleaming shape . . . clove the marauder in two."

tentacles were focused upon it. The water teemed with atomies invisible to the naked eye. Separately or in companies a hundred strong, these atomies, sea-beasts of all kinds in their early stages of development, fell softly as snowflakes upon the empty shell, and, having settled, anchored themselves for life, and gave themselves to growth and full development. Slowly the shell began to change in form and colouration. Green and purple, pink and palest gold soon spread themselves across its bulging contours, as a host of corallines and zoophytes made it their permanent resting-place. Ribbons of dainty weed and silvery nosegays of the branching sea-fir streamed up from its full-ribbed spire. Soon it was not merely covered,

face the crab's great periodic ordeal, the changing of his shell. Then in a brand-new suit of armour, *cap-à-pied*, he would no longer be able to retain his hold upon the old residence. A change, and a quick one, was imperative. He flung himself upon the bedecked shell in the rock crevice, dragged it forth, held it aloft, and probed its interior with claws and legs, much like a man examining a hunting boot. He smelt it, felt it, balanced it, and found it good. Setting it upon a level rock with the shell's mouth uppermost, he ranged himself alongside and in a twinkling the change was made. The hermit crab who unduly exposes his defenceless body is asking for immediate assassination and dismemberment.

but crowded. Twisted clumps of worm tubes, roseate corals, and tented camps of acorn barnacles piled themselves upon it till it lost all semblance of a whelk shell. Even its interior was soon encrusted with a galaxy of quaint shapes and contrasting hues. And then there came the Hermit.

He stumbled drunkenly over the rocks, his two great claws and four spindle legs having much ado to manage the load upon his back. Like most hermit crabs, his defenceless nether half necessitated his hiding it securely in a borrowed house. The broken shell upon him, a whelk shell, was so battered and riddled with holes as to be a very dubious defence. Moreover, it was irking him. He had outgrown it. Soon he must

If folks really *knew* more of the "wild," there would be less maudlin talk of "getting back to it." To "get back" to it is to emulate primitive man, a beast—yes, that is the right word—best appreciated by the civilised in geological museums or at lantern lectures. Justice, as we understand it, may be expensive at times, but it *exists*. In the wild it does not. The Hermit entered his house by fair means. He found it, he wanted it, and took it. He had not tottered away six feet with his newly-found abode ere he was challenged. Now, it is on record that one man has forced another from his home and taken the same for himself; but, thank Heaven, such an injustice is rare save in the much-sung, much-vaunted "wild." The Hermit was challenged by another hermit, or soldier crab, ever so slightly bigger than himself. The aggressor, housed in a shell rottener than the one the Hermit had discarded, came on with huge claws uplifted and eyes shining like two tiny emeralds. With a loud "click" the Hermit drew back into his new home, which rolled over on its back with the mouth upwards. The mouth was completely and most effectually closed by the Hermit's huge right claw. Now, there is a limit to caution, even in the sea. For twenty minutes the Hermit lay "doggo," whilst his assailant circled round him. A soldier crab, living as he does in a borrowed shell, always has his back to the wall, and so has developed a more pugnacious nature than that enjoyed even by the aggressive and heavily-armoured lobster. At the end of twenty minutes he cautiously half emerged, and in that moment his assailant closed with him. The end of the struggle saw the right of might asserted with a more than Prussian thoroughness. The larger Hermit, catching his rival at an unlucky moment, so paralysed him that he was actually dragged from his shell. In a twinkling the mansion wrested from him was annexed—almost. A great gleaming shape flashed from a near-by rock crevice and clove the marauder in two with a crunching sound horrible to hear. Only the wrasse's pavement-like teeth can make such a noise. The wrasse gathered up the two writhing halves, found his mouth too full to admit of collecting the second crab, and drew off for a brief space. In that uncertain interval the Hermit we first saw dragged his battered self, minus a leg and claw, towards his late aggressor's castle. Any port in a storm, but, alas, this shell was hopeless. The small hooked claws which formed the last remnants of the Hermit's

tail-armour could get no grip upon its shattered whorls. With a mighty effort he hauled himself towards his own original, highly decorated dwelling, again found it to his liking, transferred himself to it, and crawled beneath a stone—just as the wrasse returned.

Science assures us that the hermit crab owes his defenceless tail portion entirely to his habit of fighting always with his back to the wall. He is the descendant of a lobster-like ancestor who defended his tail half until it lost its armour through disuse. Then hiding it in cracks and crevices was tried, and finally the device of tucking it neatly into an empty sea-shell was discovered. In fact, the Hermit hiding beneath the stone, in fear of being eaten by the wrasse, was suffering for the sins of his fathers, who had ever taken the easiest way. But, degenerate though he might be, in a sense he had at least the wisdom to hold what he had got. In the course of time he dragged his desirable residence into some amazing situations. He hauled it up cliffs and tumbled with it down precipices. Sometimes it prevented him following quarry into inviting crevices, but he never so far lost his head as to leave it. He made incredibly protracted forced marches, fought fight after fight, defended himself against a score of foes at one time, but always with the shell upon his back, and the shell was now twice its normal size and twelve times the Hermit's weight. And all around him, at all times, were other hermits playing the same strange game of hermit life. There were hermits of all sizes from that of a pin-point upwards, ensconced in all the shells that grace British shores. It was a marvel how some of them bore their burdens. Sometimes, indeed, a shell would become so overgrown with tenants—barnacles, worms, sponges, and the like—that it defied the hermit's best efforts to drag it about with him, and so at length the house became "To Let."

But the Hermit in his huge, lumbering, weed-grown, worm- and barnacle-encrusted whelk shell, was, though he did not know it, settled for life. A hermit's stature is limited by his house. In British waters hermits are never found larger than the holding capacity of our two biggest sea-snail shells—those of the whelk and the triton or "buckie." The shell inhabited by our Hermit was not quite full size. Yet the Hermit was destined to outgrow his shell *without leaving it*, and to become a very giant of his race.

Whilst the Hermit remained ever the



"He hauled his Desirable Residence up cliffs."

same, a bristly, scaly, starting-eyed, be-whiskered swashbuckler of the sea-shore, his Desirable Residence, so tranquil and flower-like to view, was ever changing. Half its blossoms were animals and anemone-like creatures that opened and shut, and whipped the water with scores of tiny lashing tentacles. The glowing flower-banks covering the shell spelt death, or, at least, torture to the fish that sought to engulf it. Time and again some hungry cod or ling would snatch the Hermit—often in the midst of a doze

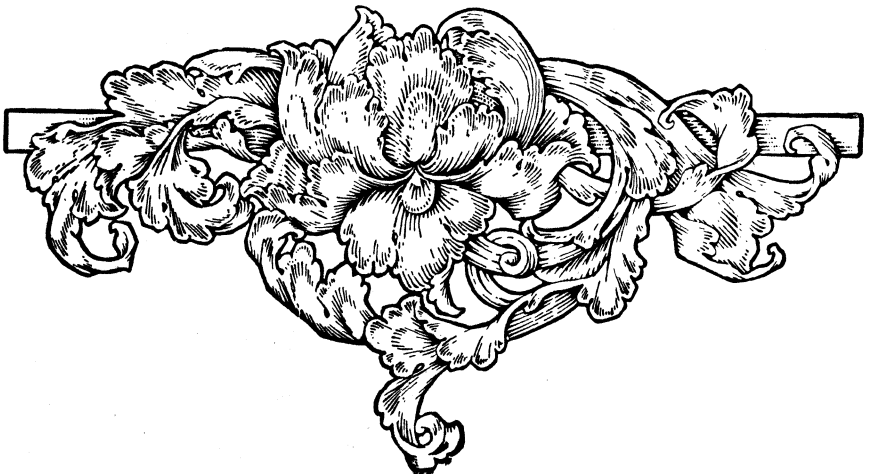
or meal—roll him in the mouth for a moment, and then shoot him forth disgustedly. It is not every householder who can boast a roof garden or window boxes that play the part of watch-dogs. Other hermits were less fortunate. Some were always being forced to "move." More than one battered shell that passed our Hermit had been tenanted by as many as fifty different crabs within a twelve-month. But the Hermit knew when he was well off. He held his ground. In the spring of his sixth year two tiny masses of life, like little rosebuds, appeared upon the chaotic outskirts of his residence. They as good as sealed it—a house invulnerable. They were cloak anemones. Daily they grew, until the two met and formed a huge tumorous girdle blotting out two-thirds of the shell. When

closed, these blossoms looked like two big striped sweetmeats of the "marshmallow" variety. Open, they rivalled the chrysanthemum grower's choicest achievements. The Hermit was hard put to it to bear them with him, yet they were his salvation, not that they settled upon him from any disinterested impulse. When the Hermit dined, they and many another of his retinue, including a huge bristle worm, hid snug within his shell, dined also. The anemones' striped stalks bent

reed-like over the crab, and the writhing pink and mauve tentacles, which formed the petals of the sea-flowers, snatched daintily at such crumbs as fell from the crab's table. Thus the whole community prospered exceedingly, a veritable mutual benefit society.

A hermit crab in a whelk shell is a common enough sight—you may see it any day on any whelk stall—but the “real thing,” the hermit who has achieved the maximum of success, who has developed his powers to their utmost limit, may only be dredged from deep water, and seen by the reader, perhaps, in the marine hall of the Zoo aquarium. Our Hermit in his Desirable Residence did not so much present the spectacle of a crab in a shell as that of a mass of gorgeous blossoms travelling rather unsteadily from time to time over the sea-bed. No fishy foe ever molested that strange collection twice. The great anemones, when touched, threw out masses of sticky clinging white threads which stung the aggressor past endurance. Rumour has it that a hermit changing his residence transfers the helpful anemones from one house to the other. Our Hermit had no need of any such artifice. For already the Desirable Residence was falling quietly, silently, and without cause for distress to its occupant, into a state of dissolution. The anemones, aided and abetted by a great mass of sponge, were steadily eating away the shell. Bit by bit it went, until the Hermit, bulging with good

living, stretched and stretched to a point unheard of by the normal shell-bound members of his race. He grew and grew until the laws of Nature dictated he should cast his armour once again. He cast it, and, as often happens in the crab world, died from sheer exhaustion. The countless units of Nature's deep-sea undertakers corps removed his remains, and the gorgeous retinue that had accompanied him in his travels sank to rest above the spot where he had once been. Few warriors, far less scavengers—and the Hermit was both—can boast such a permanent floral garniture of their last resting-places. A tiny fragment of shell rolled from under one of the anemones as it settled down. It was the tip of the old original whelk shell, a fragment which had escaped the sapping ravages of anemone and sponge. A goblin figure, a tiny hermit, scuttled out from beneath an old sea-urchin's remains and settled on the shell fragment like a vulture on a corpse. It was the merest fragment of a shell, but it just sufficed to cover him till better shelter could be found. It was too heavy for him, and swayed like a tower in an earthquake above his trembling knock-kneed legs. But it was better than nothing. It and its tenant slowly disappeared into the blue-green mists that shroud the sea-bed at the bottom of the seven-fathom line; and that is the very last we can hope to tell the reader of “this Desirable Residence.”





## AFTERWARDS

By A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE

ONE day, when wild birds sing no more,  
When blossoms droop and die,  
And wistfully we reach Death's door  
And enter, you and I . . .

And say, "Farewell—ah, Love, farewell,  
Since all our sweets are over,  
And he hath no more power to tell  
Your praise, that was your Lover."

When mice go rustling, Spring on Spring,  
Among the silver grass,  
Shall nought of fair remembering  
For ever come to pass?

Shall all these days be nothing worth,  
This rare processional  
Go sadly to the narrow earth  
And have no pride at all?

Ah, courage, dear, it cannot be!  
Our memories have made  
Too proud a tower of bravery  
For us to be afraid.



# A WONDERFUL WOMAN

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

IT was Peter's sister who told me of Felicity's engagement, and my first feeling was one of disappointment that it should not be Peter to whom she was engaged. I am old enough to be their mother, and I have known and loved Peter and Felicity since they were children. There is something rare and exquisite about Felicity. The pale ivory of the cheeks, the deep blue of her eyes and dull gold of her hair have the elusive delicacy of a Japanese picture. And behind the pale beauty of her there is a radiance, like a light that glows behind alabaster. She is eager, wistful, shy, tremulously alive. I could not, at that time, have imagined her with the light extinguished, the radiance gone.

My feeling of disappointment was illogical. She could not have married Peter. Peter had received his death sentence two years ago, and, if the best specialists of Europe were right, he had only one more year to live. And Felicity had never loved Peter. I am an incurable romancist. I would have liked to think that it was Peter's illness that was the fatal barrier between them, but really I knew it was not so. Peter had loved Felicity since she was a schoolgirl, but to Felicity Peter had never been anything but the "big brother" friend.

So she was engaged, after all. . . .

Peter's sister lay back in my best arm-chair, nibbling *petits fours*. She visited me very rarely, and then only because I was an old friend of the family. She and Peter's mother belonged to a dancing, night-clubbing, cocktail-drinking set, and neglected Peter shamefully, shrinking from the shadow of doom that hung over him.

"Who is it?" I asked.

"A Mr. Arkland," answered Peter's sister unconcernedly. "Made for Felicity. Heaps older, but don't you think Felicity's

just the girl to marry an older man? He's a widower."

I didn't like that.

"Any children?"

"Four sons, all married, and a daughter unmarried."

I groaned. Peter's sister laughed at me.

"She's charming. Wait till you've seen her. Felicity adores her already."

A faint memory stirred in my mind.

"What did you say the name was?"

"Arkland."

Then suddenly I remembered. I had stayed at an hotel in the south of England, and a Miss Arkland had been staying there with two brothers and a father. My memories of the father and brothers were very dim, but the girl—the wonderful green-blue eyes and coppery-golden hair, the white eyelids and regal neck—she had reminded me of Rossetti's Elizabeth Siddall. And she had a curious charm. When she entered a room everybody was immediately intensely conscious of her. Though she spoke to none of the other guests, there seemed, during her stay, to be something empty and colourless in the rooms when she was not in them. Everyone commented on her and watched her with interest. She was that sort of person. Her party kept themselves severely aloof. From the girl I received the impression of an almost fanatical devotion to her companions. I remembered that they had called her "Helen."

"Is her name Helen?" I said.

"Yes," said Peter's sister. "Do you know her?"

"No. You say she likes Felicity?"

"Rather. They're devoted, from all accounts. Felicity told me to give you her love and tell you she's going to bring Helen to see you."

Then Peter's sister rose, adjusted her outrageously fashionable little hat over her curled hair, blew me a kiss, said she'd had a darling tea, and went to meet one of her dancing partners.

\* \* \* \* \*

Felicity brought Helen to see me the next week. I had forgotten how vivid the girl's beauty was and how compelling her personality. She talked well, but one knew that even if she had not said a word, the effect would have been the same. There was no gainsaying her charm, but there was something about her that baffled me, and

I felt curiously apprehensive.

"You—you really love this Frank man? You know it would break my heart if you were unhappy—both mine and Peter's."

She glowed into her wonderful pale radiance—the lamp within her seemed to blaze with happiness.

"I love him—*love* him," she said.

I connected my sensation of utter exhaustion, after they had gone, with Helen Arkland's personality.

I did not meet Mr. Arkland before the wedding, but I met him and Felicity quite by accident while they were on their honeymoon. He was tall and good-looking, with



"Peter, don't tease. Is she happy?"

I did not like to be baffled. As a novelist I liked to label people and put them into pigeon-holes, and I had no pigeon-hole that Helen Arkland would fit. Felicity and I found an opportunity for a quick confidential conversation.

"Isn't she lovely?"

"She's very beautiful," I agreed.

"She's—she's a *saint*," said Felicity.

"Do you know, she adored her mother. She says she wants to remember her mother always, always—never to let herself forget one teeny thing about her. I love her for that. Yet she doesn't mind my marrying Frank."

gentle brown eyes and a brown imperial. He was an intellectual man and well-known archæologist, but there was something simple, almost childish, about him. I have known him spend an entire afternoon in whole-hearted enjoyment of a kitten's antics. In his manner to Felicity there was a mixture of boyishness and protectiveness that I found charming. I liked, too, his whimsical smile. But I saw at once that it was not the face of a strong man, and that roused again the little feeling of apprehension that I had when first I heard of the engagement. But Felicity—Felicity seemed immersed in a sea of happiness.

had never seen her lovelier—never seen her delicate charm more adorable.

Then I went North to my home, and did not come down to London again for several months. As soon as I arrived in London I received a note from Felicity, asking me to call and see her. "Do come. We're in most evenings, always on Sundays." It was a note that told me nothing. I sent for Peter. I had not seen Peter since I first heard of Felicity's engagement.

Peter came, looking more gaunt than ever, with deeper lines on his thin face.

"Well," I said, "I want you to tell me about Felicity."

He gave me his twisted, cynical smile.

"What do you want me to tell you?"

"Do you see her regularly?"

"Yes."

"Is she happy?"

"How do you tell whether people are happy?"

"Peter, don't tease. Is she happy?"

"Why don't you go and see her and judge for yourself?"

"I'm going to. You're hopeless. She says any evening—she mentions Sunday."

"Oh, go on Sunday," said Peter. "All the sons and their wives turn up on Sundays. I often go then myself. Sunday's the time to see it at its best."

"See what at its best?"

But he would not answer. I determined to go on Sunday evening. Peter's manner had mystified me. Yet Peter's manner might mean anything. It might mean that Felicity was very happy with her husband, and that the thought of that hurt him. It might simply be one of Peter's bad days, because though he could not bear anyone to mention it, there were days when every breath he drew was an agony. The explanation from which I shrank, even in my own mind, was that Felicity was unhappy.

\* \* \* \* \*

I went on to them the next Sunday evening with a mixture of pleasure and apprehension.

It was a large house with an air of solid prosperity about it. When I entered the drawing-room, the first thing I noticed was a large oil painting over the fireplace. It was of a middle-aged woman, and its likeness to Helen Arkland was amazing—the same curious green-blue eyes, coppery hair and wonderful neck. Like the younger woman, it dominated the room—the eyes seemed to follow you about as you moved.

Then I noticed that a small table in a corner of the room was full of portraits of the same woman, portraits taken at different periods of her life, but all showing the same vivid beauty and compelling personality. In front of them was a vase of white flowers which seemed to give the table the nature of a shrine.

Then Felicity came forward to greet me. My first glance at her told me nothing. She was pale, her radiance slightly dimmed; but she had always been pale, and a honeymoon could not last for ever. She was more self-possessed than she had been. That might be either the effect of three months of married life or it might be a sort of protective armour. Her husband greeted me. He struck me as being more serious, less boyish than he had been on his honeymoon, which again was only natural. Then I turned to Helen. She looked magnificent. Felicity gave me a little proud smile when I looked from Helen to her. So she still adored Helen. . . . The room seemed to be full of people. Peter gave me a mocking bow and smile from a dark corner, and I was introduced to the four brothers and three sisters-in-law—Mr. and Mrs. Bob Arkland, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Arkland, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Arkland, and Rupert Arkland. Rupert's wife was not there. Except for Peter and myself, it was a family party. There was a little music, but the evening was spent chiefly in conversation. Helen Arkland was a wonderful conversationalist. I noticed that Felicity and the sisters-in-law were very silent, but it was some time before I discovered the reason. The conversation was apparently a general one, but Helen Arkland led it very cleverly and unobtrusively so as to keep Felicity and the sisters-in-law out of it. When a lately published book was being discussed, and Felicity made one of her quick, intuitive remarks, Helen said: "Exactly. Mother liked that book of Michael Grey—on pretty much the same subject—didn't she, Dad? We read it aloud in the evenings to her."

And Felicity's glow faded, and the dead woman over the mantelpiece dominated the room. Felicity again made a gallant attempt to fight it. Again and again she returned to the charge, only to be put, by some allusion to a past she had not shared, or a joke to which she did not hold the key, courteously but firmly outside the charmed circle. It was the same with the sisters-in-law. Mrs. Bob tried hard to enter.

"Helen, you ought to hear that new Russian pianist. Bob and I went last night."

"I've heard he's good. I'm glad you made Bob go. It seems ages since he went to a concert. You're growing lazy, Bob. I used to drag you to one about once a week, and you really enjoyed them, you know. Do you remember the first concert we went to with Aunt Anne—the time when you went fast asleep?"

Bob's wife begged for details, but Helen only smiled at Bob and changed the subject, and Bob's wife relapsed into silence.

As I watched and listened, the idea of a charmed circle seemed more and more apt. In the very centre was Helen Arkland, and round her her father and four brothers, and outside Felicity and their wives. It was the curious magnetism of Helen Arkland that kept her father and brothers near her, isolated within the circle. They had admired her all their lives. With their male imperceptiveness they did not even realise that the charmed circle existed. They realised that she gave them a devotion few sisters give their brothers, and they felt grateful to her. They were proud of her beauty and her charm. Her loyalty to their dead mother touched them deeply.

I watched the sisters-in-law, too. Bob's wife admired Helen, and tried all the evening without success to enter the charmed circle. Harold's wife was angry and resentful, watching Helen with smouldering eyes. Dick's wife was frankly bored, and anxious to go home. Rupert's wife, I learned afterwards, had taken a solemn oath never to enter the house again. "I'm not going all that way just to spend the evening being made to feel out of it." Rupert said it was "all imagination," and came without her. But it was only Felicity who really suffered. Again and again I caught the troubled look on her pale face. And Peter sat silent in his corner. I went home early. Felicity went up to her bedroom with me. She looked white and exhausted.

"Isn't Helen wonderful?" she said at once.

"How?" I parried.

"How can you ask?" she said. "In every way. You could hardly imagine all she does for those boys and Frank. Nothing's too much trouble. She's so selfless. And don't you think her loyalty to—to her mother is the most beautiful thing you've ever seen? She's a perfect saint." Then the troubled look shadowed her dear face. "But I'm

so little—so petty. I meant to feel so different about it."

I walked home with Peter.

"I can't quite understand it," I said. "Did she let Felicity marry her father because she knew she couldn't help it, or did she want to feel her power over Felicity, too? Does she enjoy hurting Felicity? What's the ruling passion? Love of power or craving for admiration, or something more subtle than either? I want to understand."

Peter answered curtly: "I'm afraid I'm not interested in it psychologically."

I saw his lips tight in the dusk. Then I knew how the sight of Felicity's unhappiness tortured him.

"Do you go often?" I said.

He laughed shortly. "Oh, yes. I go every Sunday evening. It's my weekly entertainment."

\* \* \* \* \*

I saw Felicity only once more that year, and then it was Peter who made me go.

"I don't want to, Peter," I pleaded. "I hate the woman, and I can't bear to watch it."

"You must," he said. "You must know how bad things are."

"What's the use? I can't do anything."

"Don't be a coward."

The next day, when Felicity rang me up and asked me to come to dinner, I went meekly with Peter, who called for me.

Helen Arkland was there, magnificent, beautiful, and dignified, with that air of self-abnegation and devotion that became her so well. She had not changed at all. It was Felicity who had changed. My heart seemed to stop beating when I saw Felicity. She was white and lustreless, as though all her vitality had been drained from her. Her wonderful radiance was gone. The light behind the alabaster of her was extinguished. She was beaten. She had given up the struggle.

We met in the drawing-room beneath the eyes of the terrible woman who was Helen Arkland's mother. It was Felicity's birthday, and she showed us her presents, among them a ring from her husband, a pendant from Helen, and a book from Peter.

Peter, who looked almost as white as Felicity herself, talked of old times and teased her into a shadow of her old self. Then it was as if, encouraged by our presence, she had determined to force some issue. She drew in her breath and then



to obey her suggestion. Now he stood looking at the two of them.

"Go, if you like," said Helen pleasantly. "Of course I won't. You and Dad and the others go. I dare say you'd enjoy it."

Her father looked at her. She stood, secure in the dominance of her personality, under her mother's portrait, her head turned just as her mother's head was turned. Felicity watched the two of them, her breath coming and going quickly. The man neither felt the

"The man neither felt the tension nor realised the point at issue."

said: "I want to celebrate my birthday. Let's all go to a theatre to-night. Frank, ring up for seats."

It seemed a casual, insignificant suggestion, but in the silence that followed I became aware of a sudden tension.

"Darling," said Helen, "you know it's the anniversary of my mother's death. We always spend this evening at home."

Then I feared that Felicity would lose command of herself.

"That was so long ago," she said breathlessly. "This is my birthday."

Her husband had started to the door



tension nor realised the point at issue. His daughter's likeness to her dead mother and loyalty to her dead mother smote him suddenly with a pang of conscience as it so often did, and his tenderness of heart shrank from wounding her. On Felicity's side he saw only a birthday treat that might take place any time. He turned back into the room.

"We'll fix it up for some other night, then," he said.

Felicity had shot her last bolt and



"She stood, secure in the dominance of her personality, under her mother's portrait, her head turned just as her mother's head was turned. Felicity watched the two of them, her breath coming and going quickly."

failed. Poor little Felicity! She was no match for the perfect saint, and she was too proud to plead. Her face was colourless.

"Perhaps it's as well," she said in a little choking voice. "I've got a terrible headache. If you'll excuse me, I won't stay up to dinner, after all. I'm so sorry."

"Darling," said Helen in a voice of concern, "you don't look well. No, do go and rest. I'll have something sent up to you later."

We went in to dinner soon after that. The husband was vaguely distressed.

"She hasn't looked well for some time," he said anxiously.

"Don't worry, dearest," said Helen; "she needs rest. I'm so glad we arranged not to go to-night. Don't go up and disturb her, will you? I'm sure she only wants absolute quiet."

"Perhaps she needs a change."

I was sorry for the man, though I despised his blindness and his weakness. He loved Felicity.

"We'll go away for a week or two as soon as we can arrange it," said Helen.

"We!" I could not resist a glance at Peter. His face was like a mask, his eyes blazing.

Helen carried off that dinner magnificently, in spite of Peter's silence and my unresponsiveness. She had enough tact and *savoir faire* to carry off any situation. However much one hated her, one could not help admiring her.

"It's killing Felicity," said Peter, as we went home. "Something will have to happen."

"Things don't happen," I replied. "You get a situation like this in real life and think it must come to a *dénouement* as it does in books, but it doesn't. It just drags on and on till——"

"It kills one or other of them. In this case Felicity," supplied Peter. "No. Something's *got* to happen."

"You can't interfere in other people's lives," I said.

Peter smiled, the mirthless smile that was just like a slit across his thin face.

"You can interfere in other people's lives. That's just what makes Life so interesting."

"Don't be silly, Peter. What can you do?"

Irrelevantly he replied: "The doctor gives me six months at most now."

\* \* \* \* \*

I was away then for several weeks, and it was a casual sentence in a friend's letter that showed me suddenly what Peter had meant.

"What do you think of Peter's engagement to Helen Arkland? I think it's ideal. She's such a saintly woman, and poor Peter has had such a hard time. It's wonderful to think that she took him knowing he's only got six months to live, and it's wonderful to think of his finding happiness at last."

I came down to London in panic. I went to Peter first.

"Peter, you mustn't! You're mad! It's wicked!"

But Peter was blandly, obstinately incomprehensive. "I don't know what you mean. If you're referring to my engagement, you should congratulate me and tell me that I'm a very lucky man. With regard to its being 'wicked,' I have told Miss Arkland quite frankly that I am a doomed man, and she accepts me in full knowledge of that fact."

His eyes mocked me as he spoke.

I went to Felicity, and she also was obstinately blind.

"I'm so glad for both of them," she said. Her eyes were bright. Fresh life seemed to have come to her. Her delicate elusive charm had returned to her. Helen was still there, but freedom lay before her. She could endure being put into the corner by Helen now—now that it was only a question of weeks.

"Helen——" I began.

"Helen is wonderful," she said quickly, "and Peter is a darling. And the doctors may be wrong."

I looked at her keenly. I was not sure whether she was as blind as she seemed to be, or whether she was deliberately accepting Peter's incredible sacrifice. I could not blame her if she was. She had never loved Peter, and she loved her husband.

I could not bear to go to Peter's wedding, so I went North again. Various friends sent accounts of it to me. Helen had looked, they all said, "too wonderful for words."

I saw Felicity once in the next month, but not Peter. The first thing I noticed in Felicity's house was that both the oil painting of her husband's first wife and the table full of photographs had been removed. The next thing I noticed was that Felicity was her old radiant, glowing self, and her husband had regained that quality of care-free boyishness that I had noticed and liked when first I met him. It was a Sunday evening, and the sons and their wives were there as usual, but it was a very different Sunday evening from the last one I had attended. There was more laughter, the conversation was lighter and more inconsequent than when Helen had been there. There was a happy, friendly family atmosphere. The sons chaffed Felicity in elder-brother fashion. There was a general sensation of relief, of some exhausting strain removed, that all of them felt, though not one would have owned to. One of the

curious characteristics of Helen Arkland's personality was that you realised how she exhausted you only when she had gone, never when she was present. But something still troubled Felicity. She said to me before I went :

"Peter—Peter did marry Helen because he loved her, didn't he?"

"Of course he did," I lied reassuringly, and the last shadow seemed to drop from her brightness.

The weeks went by, and I did not hear from Peter. In my own mind I played with his story as though it had been the plot of a novel, inventing imaginary endings to it. There was one grim ending that haunted me. It was of Peter's finding the doctor's diagnosis wrong, and having to face a normal lifetime tied to Helen Arkland. At other times I imagined him falling in love with her.

But when at last I saw him I knew that neither of my endings was right. Peter would not live a normal lifetime, and he was not falling in love with his wife. Helen herself obviously enjoyed her position. She had sacrificed herself for a dying man, so public opinion ran. She was "wonderful," a "perfect saint." She enjoyed Peter's house and money. She had become very tired of her own home, and of Felicity, and of her father. She enjoyed her position as Peter's wife and the admiration of Peter's friends. She moved among them in the same atmosphere of self-sacrifice and saintliness in which she had moved at home. At home it had been her mother's memory, and here it was Peter. And she enjoyed Peter. Peter, incredibly thin and shrunken and lined, acted to perfection the rôle of devoted husband. Peter was a sportsman. He had made a bargain and was standing by it, not shirking its slightest obligation. Not one attention that his duty to his wife called for did he omit. Helen thought that in his own reserved way he adored her. But I had known Peter from his babyhood, and I knew that he neither forgot nor forgave her one slight, one unhappiness she had dealt Felicity. For Felicity's sake he acted a part that nauseated him. He still had his bad days, of course—the days when he stayed in bed, with the blinds of his bedroom drawn. Even Helen, by the doctor's orders, was not allowed to visit him then. I think he looked forward to his bad days.

When I paid my first visit after his wedding he said to me: "Have you seen Felicity?" Helen was there, so I only

said "Yes," but I saw in his eyes that he, too, had seen Felicity, and that the memory repaid him for the torture of his marriage, that his sufferings brought him a certain fanatical joy because he bore them for Felicity, and it was the only thing Fate had ever allowed him to do for Felicity. He never admitted to me the real motive of his marriage, yet once, when we were alone, I said: "Peter, it's all so terrible and so—useless. It's killing you, and then she'll only go back."

He looked at me with his twisted smile. "She won't," he said. "She'll have more scope here."

I did not understand then what he meant.

\* \* \* \* \*

He lived only three months of the six the doctor had given him. I stayed away from his funeral, as I had stayed away from his wedding. I could not bear to see Helen, and I could not pretend to be sorry. I knew that somehow, somewhere, he had found peace, and I was glad.

I did not see Helen again till a year after Peter's death, but Peter's sister urged me to call. "You know, she does like Peter's old friends to go to see her. She is so—wonderfully faithful."

So I called.

The first thing I noticed was an enormous enlargement of a photograph of Peter hanging over the mantelpiece. Peter had refused to have his portrait painted. Then I noticed that on the table in the corner of the room was a collection of photographs of Peter, and before them some white flowers in a white vase. Helen herself was in deep mourning. Peter's sister and Peter's mother and several of Peter's friends were there, and the shadow of Peter hung heavily over it all.

As usual Helen dominated the room and led the conversation, bringing it, by a hundred deft little turns, always back to Peter and herself as Peter's widow. I felt the depression of guilt that overspread Peter's mother and sister at the many little reminders of their neglect of him that Peter's widow seemed unconsciously to convey, and I felt, too, the old magnetism of Helen that drew them all to the house. Helen herself, in her widow's weeds beneath the enormous enlargement, was like the high priestess of some sacred rites, and with it all she was her suave, cultivated, charming, beautiful self. I hardly dared raise my eyes, for always,



when I did, the eyes of Peter of the enlargement seemed to be looking down on us in cynical enjoyment. I knew now what he had meant by "scope."

Peter's sister came home with me.

"Helen is, one in a thousand," she said.

"Most other women would have forgotten poor old Peter altogether by now. I should.

She never does a thing that Peter didn't like. She keeps things on in the house exactly as he liked them. She makes me feel a beast whenever I go, because I bothered so little about him, while she—well, she's a perfect saint."

Somewhere behind the darkness I seemed to catch Peter's mocking smile.



## THE BLUE GARDEN.

**I**N my dream-garden's confines I  
 Have a Blue Garden,  
 A plot to catch the blue o' the sky,  
 And though the day be wet or dry,  
 I shall not weep, I shall not sigh,  
 Having netted blue heaven thereby  
 In my Blue Garden.

Aubretia and periwinkle blue  
 In my Blue Garden,  
 Forget-me-not, a lover true;  
 Blue iris and blue lupins too,  
 And columbine winged as she flew,  
 Borage that lifts the heart anew  
 In my Blue Garden.

Tall delphiniums set in a row  
 In my Blue Garden,  
 God wot I shall have sweets enow,  
 With blue sweet peas on tippy-toe,  
 Lilac and gentians, a brave show.  
 Blue butterflies will come and go  
 In my Blue Garden.

Anchusa and blue phlox and stocks  
 In my Blue Garden,  
 And eke the tall blue hollyhocks,  
 Violets veiled in their green smocks,  
 With speedwell and such simple folks  
 I need not think of what's-o'clocks  
 In my Blue Garden.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

# YES AND NO

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LONDON

MRS. DOWSE, greengrocer, maintained that Mrs. Meakin owed her two pounds three shillings and fourpence. Mrs. Meakin disputed certain items in the account, and declared that until these were amended she would not pay one penny. Finally resort was had to the Law.

The Law asked Mrs. Dowse severely: "Do you say that on September second you sold this lady two pounds of tomatoes? Yes or no?"

"Can't be answered that way," said Mrs. Dowse.

"Surely. Why not?"

"Because if you believe me and my books, then I did sell her two of toms. on September second; but if you'd sooner believe her word, then I made her an unintentional present of the fruit."

\* There was laughter. Mrs. Dowse won.

And afterwards a smart reporter got a word or two with her.

"Do you never say 'Yes' or 'No'?" he asked.

"I'm not given to it," said Mrs. Dowse.

"What did you say when your husband asked you to marry him?"

"Say? I said we could but try it."

The next day there was an amusing paragraph about Mrs. Dowse in two actual newspapers. She read it with considerable satisfaction. The advertisement for which you pay is good; the advertisement for which you don't pay is better.

"Ah," said Mrs. Dowse to her two sons, who assisted her in the shop, "that ought to bring people into the shop. Once I get them here, I can make them come back again. The trouble has been to make a start."

Mrs. Dowse had formerly worked in her husband's business in one of the nearer suburbs. The business had grown rapidly. Three years after his death she was able to sell it at a very good price. She began to look round for another opportunity.

She finally acquired a shop at a derelict price in the north-west of London. There seemed to be no competition to fear, and the people in the neighbourhood mostly had a little money to spend. She put the shop in order, and made no great expenditure on its outer glories.

Then came a blow. Before her premises were opened, Messrs. Multiple and Co. opened one of their large branch establishments little more than a quarter of a mile away from her. Messrs. Multiple's shop had a much more imposing and decorative frontage than Mrs. Dowse's. It had every kind of exotic luxury for sale. It had an excellent motor van. It was beautifully organised. The consequence was that people patronised the establishment of Messrs. Multiple, and for the most part left Mrs. Dowse's shop alone.

She made her way, but very slowly. In some respects she had an advantage over the big shop. Her expenses were less. She paid less for labour. She had a very useful connection with some small growers in that suburb less than ten miles away, and she could buy from them without the intervention of middlemen. She also bought at Covent Garden, and her elder son was a first-rate buyer. She could frequently give her customers produce fresher and better at a lower price than they could get from Messrs. Multiple. But, as she said, the trouble was to get the customers into the shop. Messrs. Multiple's establishment looked to be altogether of a better class.

The newspaper paragraphs proved an even better advertisement than Mrs. Dowse had expected. They called the attention of ladies in the neighbourhood to the fact that they had in a shop quite close to them a woman who never used the words "Yes" and "No." Logically, that was no particular reason why they should buy their brussels sprouts from her. But it aroused their curiosity, and they could hardly investigate without making a purchase. Mrs.

Dowse smilingly told them that these newspapers did exaggerate so, but at the same time she was careful not to answer one of their questions by "Yes" or "No." The

same, I don't like it. Mrs. Dowse may be a bit of a crank, but she knows her job, and she's an honest woman."

Mrs. Smith told all this to Mrs. Brown,



" 'Well, I have and I haven't,' said Mrs. Dowse."

sons were also in the plot, and played up properly.

"It's true enough," said the eldest to an inquiring customer. "I've never known mother to give 'Yes' or 'No' to a question in my life."

But to her new customers she gave better quality and lower prices than Messrs. Multiple had been giving them. She also gave full weight and sometimes over-weight.

"I'm going there regularly in the future," said Mrs. Smith. "The last lot I had from Messrs. Multiple was stale and dear, and half an ounce under weight in the pound. Nothing to make a fuss about, but, all the

and she likewise in time transferred her custom to Mrs. Dowse. Mrs. Brown's friend Mrs. Robinson said to her: "What! Do you go to that funny little shop?"

"Yes, rather," said Mrs. Brown. "Everybody's going there now. The woman's a perfect scream. She won't say 'Yes' or 'No' to a question. There were long articles about it in one of the newspapers. Just come along in with me and I'll show you."

"Good morning," said Mrs. Brown in the shop. "Have you, by any chance, seen my little girl go past?"

"Well, I have and I haven't," said Mrs. Dowse.

"Well, it must be one or the other, mustn't it?"

"What I mean, mum, is that I saw her go past the door, and then I looked again, and it was some other little girl."

him, and said that they did not give him a chance. He did not think that Mrs. Dowse had any capital to speak of—in which he was entirely mistaken—and that a month or six weeks of



"'Good morning,' said Mrs. Brown. 'Have you, by any chance, seen my little girl go past?'"

Whereat Mrs. Robinson was so delighted that she bought Victoria plums, and they were very much better than the weary and bloomless fruit that she had been getting from Messrs. Multiple.

Once or twice, after her shop had been crowded all the morning, Mrs. Dowse put up her somewhat shabby shutters at mid-day and chalked on them: "Sold out. More to-morrow."

It need hardly be said that this did not escape the notice of the manager at Messrs. Multiple's. He was losing customers, his sales were going down, and he sent in reports to the head office. He complained bitterly of the goods that were being supplied to

steady underselling might put her out of action.

It did nothing of the kind. Mrs. Dowse was perfectly frank to her customers.

"They're selling these things very much cheaper down the road," she said. "They're not the same quality as mine, but they're selling them for less than they cost. If I wanted to do them an injury, I'd recommend you to try there."

After a lapse of some months a gentleman called from Messrs. Multiple's head office and desired to see Mrs. Dowse. He was shown into the parlour at the back of the shop.

"Good morning, Mrs. Dowse," he said.

"I'm from Messrs. Multiple, and I'm going to be perfectly frank with you. There's no room for two shops like yours in this neighbourhood. We're simply cutting one another's throats, and it's not worth while."

"I've not noticed much wrong with my throat," said Mrs. Dowse. "But what were you suggesting?"

"If you stop here you'll be frozen out. We've got the capital, and we can do it. But it will cost us less to make you a fair offer. We'll give you a profit of twenty per cent. on what you paid for this little shanty, and with that a clever woman like you will soon pick up a better business elsewhere."

Mrs. Dowse shook her head. "I made this business," she said. "It wasn't a business before I came here, you know. But the thing's grown, and I could do with a bigger shop, if you care to sell yours."

"That, of course, is ridiculous. We've spent a lot of money on that place. If you don't like my offer, tell me what you would like."

She told him.

"I'll submit it to the directors," he said, "but of course you haven't an earthly chance."

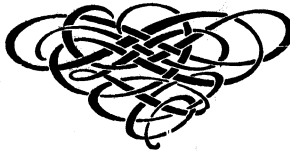
"Don't let them be too long about it," said Mrs. Dowse. "I may want more in a few months' time."

After he had gone, Mrs. Dowse instructed her sons to look out for a new opening in some other district.

"What!" said the eldest. "You don't think they'll pay all that, do you?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Dowse, forgetting that this was the word she never used.

And they did.



## A WAYSIDE POOL.

**A** WAYSIDE pool, whose liquid edge  
 Borders upon the road,  
 Sheltering within its sedge  
 A solitary toad;  
 Reflecting in its watchful eye  
 All the emotions of the sky.

A natural philosopher, the pool  
 Sees much of life while standing just apart;  
 All things pass by, nor touch its heart  
 Save when its surface light and cool  
 Is rippled by a sudden splashing stone  
 Which by a passing boy is idly thrown.

The little song-birds gather at its lip  
 And of its quenching waters quickly sip;  
 Then scatter, as a market cart goes by,  
 Up once again into the sunlit sky,  
 And leave the pool a tiny silver gleam  
 Set in the living crown of Summer's dream.

GILBERT DAVIS.

# PER ARDUA

By PHILIP MOWBRAY

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

HENRY DRAYTON stepped back from the canvas and regarded it with a look that was frankly admiring. "Ripping!" he said ecstasically, "Oh, simply ripping!" It was typical of the man that he should, a bare second later, wilt and collapse, and glance fearfully over his shoulder into the curtained recesses of the studio. "Good Heaven," he thought, "supposing someone had come in! Conceited ass! Strutting idiot!"

There was, he decided upon reflection, something particularly deplorable in this recent tendency to boisterous self-appreciation—something that smacked unmistakably of Philistia and Mammon. A few years ago he had never felt drawn towards this vice. Even then, of course, one sometimes realised in an impersonal, detached way that a thing was good; but the knowledge, based on long experience, that it would be impossible to find a single sentient being willing to back a similar conviction with hard cash—even a very little cash—had a chastening effect. One felt for one's happiest achievements at the most a subdued and slightly melancholy affection.

Astonishing the difference an Academy portrait could make! He recalled the day three years ago, the day after the private view; savoured again the mixture of bewilderment, elation, and chagrin that had overcome him as he read one newspaper after another. Nowhere was his portrait of Sir Corbyn Drake ignored—nowhere, indeed, severely criticised; but he saw the walls of a prosperous and flourishing city of his dreams fall down in utter ruin before the trumpets of the critics. "A power that is almost repellent. . . ." "Mordant insight. . . ." "Something of a shock to the adoring *matinée* flapper. . . ." And then, following the surprise of the great actor's obviously sincere delight, other surprises.

He owed it all, this sudden metamorphosis of fortune, to Roger Bellingham. How had he ever managed to persuade Sir Corbyn to sit to an obscure nonentity like him?

Wonderful man! Always, since those distant days of courtesy unclehood, the best of friends and wisest of advisers; soon, if all went well, to be the donor of the greatest gift of all.

At this most pleasant point in his reverie the benign, almost dreamy expression on Drayton's face suffered a sudden and alarming change. He flung up a hand to his head and tugged at his short, untidy hair with an unconscious force that brought tears to his eyes. He groaned aloud in mingled wretchedness and self-contumely. The thought of Julia Bellingham had reminded him that the day was Wednesday and the date the eighteenth.

He threw down the brush he had been holding, and ran towards the studio door, cursing himself in quick, disjointed sentences. There followed the woolly report of a lighting geyser, the sound of running water, and then the bitter cry of one who cuts his strop in half.

Drayton had been in love with Julia for more years than he cared to remember. It had seemed hopeless at first. It was always something of a surprise to him that he managed to provide for himself—to weather the financial storms that periodically raged about him and never quite receded beyond the horizon. As for keeping a wife— But now, with an income that was mulcted in tax of more than he had been used to earn in two years, and that might reasonably be regarded as assured for the future, he had lost no time in laying his altered fortune at her feet.

Her refusal came as a shock—indeed, her whole attitude puzzled, and so distressed him. He had thought, in as much as he had allowed himself to think of the matter at all, that behind a friendship so complete, so understanding, and so tender, there must be, on her side as well as his, another feeling altogether.

The first time he proposed she had smiled and talked of something else; the second time, albeit kindly, she had laughed; and

the last time she had slipped her arm through his, as they walked down the garden of Bellingham's house in Woking, and spoken with something of her old candour.

"Henry, old chap, you're getting awfully impetuous in your old age, aren't you? Do you realise that you're thirty-five and I'm twenty-eight? Staid, settled folk who look before they leap—or ought to. It seems so silly, after all these years, to use the dear old phrase 'This is so sudden,' but really it's just the tremendous time we've known each other that makes it sudden. You see, I've grown so used to being fond of you as a friend; and if I've ever thought of other things—and don't you imagine I'm going to admit I have—I've stopped myself immediately, because it might, just possibly, have hurt a bit. *I am* fond of you, Henry—as a friend. But as a husband——"

She pressed his arm against her side and began to laugh a little. "You know, Henry, you're so absent-minded. Even if you proved capable of remaining really fond of anyone for long, I don't believe for a moment that you'd manage to remember that you were! I can just hear you answering someone who inquired after poor me: 'My wife? *Wife*. . . . Oh, of *course*—old Julia. Oh, she's all right. At least—is she? I don't seem to have seen her about the place lately.'"

She had caught his manner and his tone to a nicety. Drayton's laugh broke out in spite of himself. "Julia," he expostulated, "what nonsense! Half my forgettings are due to the way the thought of you takes up most of the room——"

"Listen, Henry," she interrupted, halting in her walk and turning to face him. "I'll give you a chance to prove that. My birthday is in a few weeks. I'll tell you the date the last thing before you go this evening. Remember it—you must promise not to write it down, or mark a calendar, or anything—and come on the right day to wish me many happy returns, and—well, perhaps I'll have made up my mind. Is that a bargain?"

"It is," said Drayton.

He had, in the main, been so constantly and so delightfully obsessed with thoughts of what should happen when Wednesday the eighteenth were past that the advent of the date itself had somehow escaped him.

Already it was half-past eleven, and the best part of the morning had gone. No time, he thought, as he furiously applied a towel

to his face, to change his clothes. Not that Julia would mind.

He was almost ready to start when he thought of the birthday present. He might at least have remembered that! What could he take? His gaze, straying in perplexity round the walls of his untidy bedroom, encountered a head of Julia done in oils. The very thing, he thought. Julia had never seen it. For it had been painted, very aptly and fittingly in the present circumstances, from memory. He found paper and string, and made as neat a parcel of the picture as he might. A moment later he had put on his hat and overcoat and left the house.

Gradually, as he walked down the Archway Road towards the Tube station, the feeling of mingled guilt and worry began to subside. After all, he told himself, he *had* remembered. A little late, perhaps, but what was that? And the present had suggested itself so opportunely. This was evidently one of his lucky days. Julia would like the portrait. The portrait——

Drayton stopped suddenly, conscious of a cold internal pang. He glanced very slowly down, first at one hand and then at the other, as if fearful of what inspection might reveal. Without a word he turned on his heel and strode back up the hill. The portrait, if he remembered rightly, was on the bed.

It was not until every pocket had been searched, first rapidly, then systematically, that he allowed himself to be convinced that his latchkey was, as he had suspected, but refused to believe, on the sitting-room mantelpiece. Well, the Greens, who lived on the ground floor, would have to let him in. He rang. There was no response. Heaven send the Greens weren't out! He started knocking, gently at first.

"Can't get in, sir?"

Drayton turned and looked at the policeman who was regarding him amiably over the gate of the front garden. With no small effort he swallowed a retort that was less than entirely courteous. "No," he said. "Lost my key. Everyone out." Something in the massive figure at the gate suggested an idea. "Look here," he went on persuasively, "I *must* get in. Couldn't you help me? A good, strong push——"

The policeman's rather bovine face was illumined by a momentary enthusiasm. He looked at the green-painted door with anticipatory relish, seeming to see it reel back on broken hinges from the thrust of

a broad shoulder. Then the light died out of his eyes.

"The question is, sir," he said heavily, "are you, or are you not, the owner of this 'ouse?"

"I rent the first floor," Drayton replied.

"I'm sorry, sir." There was reproof as well as sorrow in the policeman's voice. "Skeleton keys is what you need. I should advise a locksmith. There's one at the bottom of Hazelville Road." He moved off—out of temptation.

Drayton looked at his watch and whistled dolorously. "It's good-bye to the portrait," he said to himself.

Once more descending Archway Road, he cogitated on the subject of a present. Hating himself for the lack of originality, he could yet think of nothing but gloves. How did one buy gloves? he wondered. By size, wasn't it? How on earth could a man be expected to know such things?

In the draper's he had entered inspiration came to him. Julia had written of her father's new two-seater and her earliest essays in driving it. Fur gloves for motoring. They wouldn't have to fit exactly. He bought, magnificently, the best the shop could boast, and hurried to the station.

As the train bore him towards Waterloo, his spirits began again to revive. He had taken off his overcoat—the Tube seemed doubly stuffy after his exertions—and lighted a pipe. A pleasant contentment stole over him. It was not, perhaps his luckiest of lucky days, he was ready to admit, still—— He was glad, on the whole, that he had, as it were, changed his mind about the present. That painting—wasn't there something a little absurd in offering one's *lares* and *penates* to the woman one avowedly desired to marry? You might, if you were sufficiently evilly disposed, regard it as an attempt to force her hand in a detail of future furnishing. Now, the gloves——

Drayton began, with that faculty of visualisation which perhaps had grown to fill the space designed for memory, to paint a mental picture of Julia and the gloves. He saw her undoing the string, unwrapping first the brown and then the tissue paper. A little quick intake of the breath, eyes raised to his. "Henry! How splendid!" Now she slipped them on, wriggling luxurious fingers in the fleecy lining. She put them up to her face, revelling in the silky softness of the fur, and against the dull blue-grey

the brightness of her cheeks thrilled him like a song. Her eyes——

"Allchangere!" said the Tube man for at least the sixth time. And then, with pardonable irritation: "D'you want to go back to Highgate, you at the end there?"

Drayton jumped to his feet. "Charing Cross?" he muttered. "I'd no idea——" He had to plough his way through the hostile crowd he had kept waiting at the carriage doors.

As he made his way up the stairs and along the complicated but familiar catacombs, he hummed a tune and swung the little parcel that contained the gloves. Before long he would be at Woking. Should he charter one of those raffish and disreputable taxis to be found outside the station—private cars gone to the dogs, as it were—or gladden for once the heart of the pugnacious, Dickensian little fellow in the bottle-green coat who alone upheld the fine Victorian tradition? No, pleasanter far on such a day to walk. Down there, instead of London's thin and chilly fog, there would be sun and frost. A keen air would be stirring on the hill one climbed to reach Hook Heath; and in walking, as in no other way, one grasped the full enjoyment of anticipation.

He found himself at the subterranean cross-roads, facing the signpost that directed the traveller this way and that in the great London warren. It had always appealed to him, this conventional signpost, so intimately a thing of the open road and the shadowed lane, as having here a sort of elfin incongruity. However, one turned to the left for the Bakerloo escalator.

It was unfortunate that there should be a ticket inspector on this occasion at the head of the moving staircase. Usually the pass was unguarded. Drayton, standing by the inspector's side, fumbled unhappily in waistcoat pockets. "I've got it *somewhere*," he said. "At least, I could have sworn. . . . No, I've lost the beastly thing."

"I'm afraid you'll have to pay, sir," replied the inspector, too busy punching tickets to look up.

"Right ho," said Drayton resignedly. "I came from Highgate. Fivepence, isn't it? Well, we can manage that. Yes. At least——his voice sank to a horrified whisper——"can we?" Once more the cold internal pang, but this time intensified, and cruel as an unexpected blow. "Ye gods," he cried, "every cent of ready cash I've got is in my note-case, and my note-case





"The crowd that gathered miraculously from nowhere in particular."

is in my overcoat, and I've left my overcoat in the train!"

Even at the time, when the misery of his situation had yet to gain humour in retrospect, he admitted that the Underground treated him as one gentleman treats another. There were visits to be paid to officials who lived in unexpected dens whose doors, marked "private," opened on interminable concrete tunnels. One and all seemed anxious to forget their rightful five-pence in their zeal to recover Drayton's overcoat.

It was in the lost property office that the last act of the tragedy was played out. Somewhere unseen in the background a voice spoke ceaselessly into a telephone. "Highgate! Highgate! That you, Highgate? Overcoat left in last coach 12.35 down to-day. . . . What? Right. Camden, please. . . ."

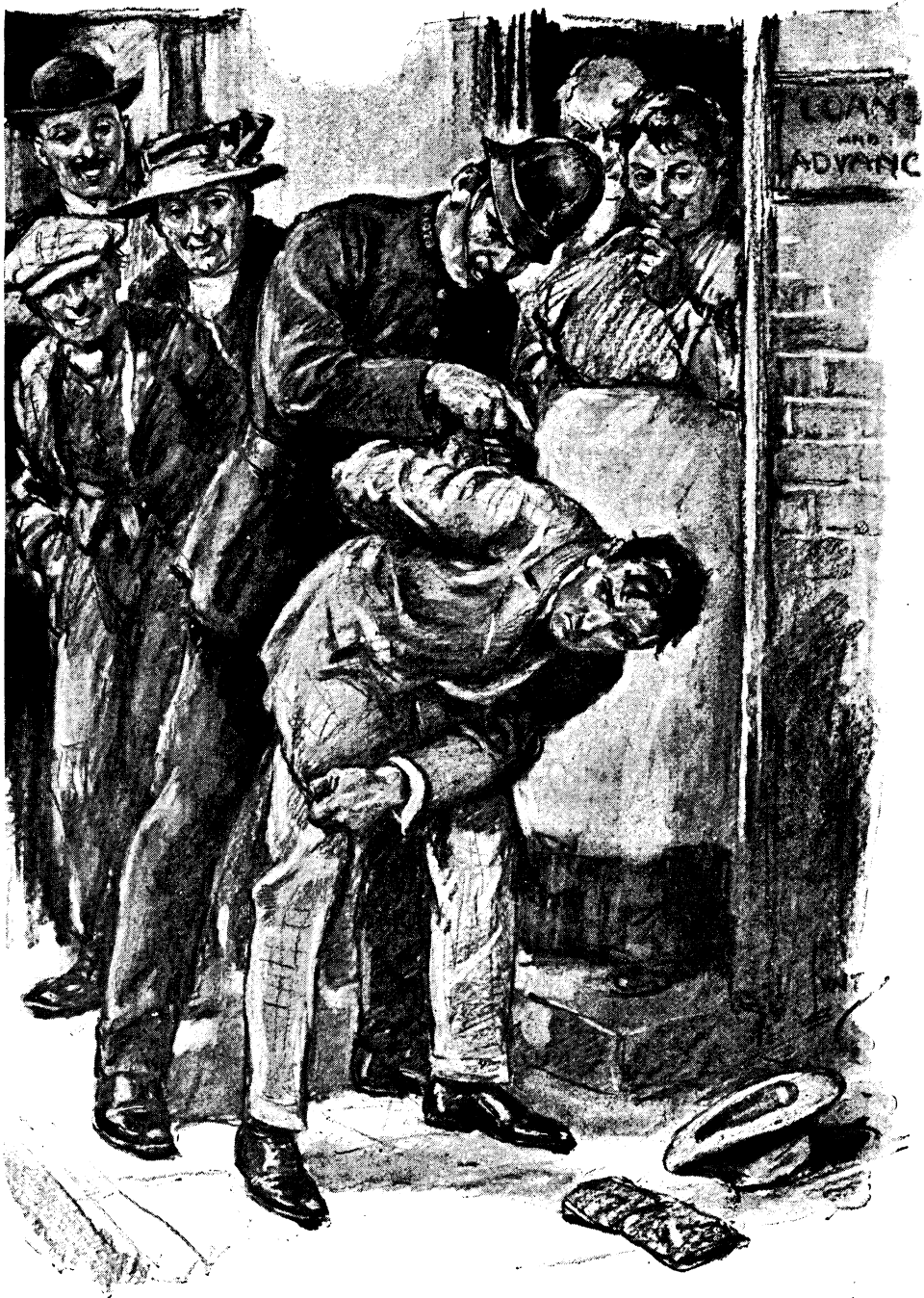
To Drayton, waiting in tense impatience at the lost property counter, the affair took on the heroic aspect of a Drury Lane melodrama. He pictured the train, standing in seeming innocence at Goudge Street Station, while a handful of passengers leisurely disregarded the command to hurry on. Suddenly the door of an office at the far end of the platform bursts open; a white-haired station-master hurls himself towards the train. Too late! A derisive scream of whirling armatures, the rising crescendo of the wheels, and the red tail-lamp is dwindling in the echoing tunnel. The station-master stands there alone, a pitiful, stricken figure. And so at Mornington Crescent and Camden Town and each successive station.

But they sifted the matter to the bottom at last, and Drayton, still ignorant of where his overcoat might be, at least knew where it was not. It had bolted from the warren. Somewhere on ground level, above the jurisdiction of the Tubes, a dishonest citizen was counting those all-important Bradburys with a vulgarly moistened finger-tip.

Out in the open air once more, Drayton laughed. There was, he realised, a touch of admirable conventionality about his present position. Was he not penniless, and was not this the Thames Embankment? To be penniless elsewhere would have been to fly in the face of tradition. But he must certainly raise some money without loss of time. How? Of course. He smiled his relief. The Incubus!

Safe in his breast-pocket, that noble heirloom, the "massive solid gold hunter" that Julia had irreverently dubbed the Incubus, seemed to throw added power into its sonorous tick at the thought of the service it would render. It was no neophyte in the rôle of *deus ex machina*, as certain tiny hieroglyphs within its case bore witness.

Once across the river Drayton passed more than one establishment of the kind



"'And I warn you,' panted the flushed and perspiring Dickson, tightening his already painful grip of his victim's twisted arm, 'that anything you say——'"

that he wanted, before he could decide to enter one of them, and it was the entrance beneath the sign of the three spheres in Hendiseck Street that eventually admitted him. Here the Incubus changed hands. "Twenty shillings," said that aged oppor-

tunist, Mr. Pelf, "and it ain't worth that—not these days."

Drayton hesitated. He could get more by bargaining. Still, a pound would see him through the day. "Right," he said curtly. "Buck up, d'you mind? I'm in a hurry."

He pocketed the ticket. The swing door of the cubicle was still oscillating on wheezy hinges as he strode towards the station.

Mr. Pelf stood quite still for a long time, and beneath his bushy and venerable white eyebrows his eyes were round and incredulous as he gazed at the empty cubicle. In forty-five years of professional experience such a thing had never happened to him before. Mad, was he, this fellow with the watch? He must be. And yet he didn't look exactly mad. Worried, perhaps; desperate, eh? A sudden idea crossed his mind. That long, straight nose, those deep-set eyes. . . . He pulled out a newspaper from under the counter and began to turn its pages. "Ere," he called a little later, "Rachel!"

Ten minutes or more had passed before Drayton returned and leant over the counter with an expression of mingled irritation and amusement. He had looked rather foolish at the booking-office. "Not 'ad your money?" said Pelf, registering incredulity with voice and face and hands, "Why, I give it you, ain't I?" A futile argument sprang up. "Well"—the pawnbroker seemed puzzled, but unconvinced—"maybe my memory ain't as good as yours." He misunderstood the harsh and bitter laugh that the remark evoked.

Mr. Pelf slowly produced a ledger, and even more slowly turned its leaves. He made a great business of fetching and examining the watch. Then he must see the ticket and compare it with the entry. "We want to make *quite* sure," he kept saying. It was only when he caught sight, out of the corner of his eye, of a blue helmet beyond the window that his doubts were dissipated.

Drayton, with the money safe in his trouser pocket, and his cares once more in full retreat, strode out of the side-door into the capacious arms of the policeman.

If anterior circumstances had been a little different; if Drayton had suffered less incitement to impatience; if it had not been from a comfortable and well-earned rest that 1078 P.C. Dickson had been roused by Mrs. Pelf's tale of the client who was the "very spit-'n'-image" of Hilary Dowson, the much-sought principal of the great Confidential Assurance swindle, then much unpleasantness might have been avoided. As it was, two tempers, much tried, flared simultaneously. There was a struggle, vastly enjoyed by the onlookers, in the alley beside the pawnshop. It ended, for Drayton, ingloriously.

"And I warn you," panted the flushed and perspiring Dickson, tightening his already painful grip of his victim's twisted arm, "that anything you say——"

"Anything I feel at all inclined to say," Drayton retorted in a savage whisper, "would shock you inexpressibly. However," he continued, regaining his normal voice with an effort, for he was out of breath, and his arm hurt abominably, "let's play this beastly farce along the proper lines. I'll say 'There must be some mistake,' and you ask me if I'm going to go quiet. I am. Now let's make for the police station and clear the thing up."

Half an hour later Drayton breathed the free air of Lambeth with heartfelt relief. It was true that they had, surprisingly, been human at the station. There were a few formalities to be observed. The sergeant, seeming to believe his assertions of identity, had persuaded him to fill in the time, while photographs were fetched, and "official descriptions" hunted from the files, by sketching pencil caricatures of the staff. "As a memento, like," he pleaded. "We don't have an R.A. in here every day."

Drayton complied, and the delight with which his sketches were received would have softened a harder heart than his. Before he left he had exchanged apologies with Dickson, who treasured a drawing of himself, a terrific, gorilla-like creature, tearing limb from limb a wan, emaciated artist.

Still, Drayton was glad to be out of it. All the time he had been beset by the fear that there would be discovered something they thought peculiar to the iniquitous Dowson. He might, for all he knew, be growing birthmarks as he sat there. It would be like his luck.

Well, it was over now, and there was no longer any obstacle between him and his goal. He quickened his pace down the ugly street that he had been told would bring him within a minute's walk of Waterloo.

When Drayton and his captor struggled in the alley by the pawnshop, there had been present in the crowd that gathered miraculously from nowhere in particular one Smiler Harris, a dour and unattractive gentleman who belied his name. He had watched with interest, and later, when Drayton disappeared within the police station, he had made inquiries. The case seemed to demand his attention.

Here, was his line of thought, you have a bloke that goes and pops some article unknown. He hops it only to return.

Why? Because old Pelf's told him he hasn't that much money in the shop, and must send out for it. Very well. Bloke comes back for his money, and gets it. Meanwhile old Ma Pelf's slipped the cops the word. Again, why? Because Pelf thinks that anything that's worth as much as that might get him into trouble. So far so good. Bloke interrogated at station. Proves his right to pop the article unknown. (He wouldn't, thought the observant Mr. Harris, have looked so blinking happy if he'd left the cash in there pending further inquiries.) And so he goes off to spend it—unless, of course, he meets with an accident. The "accident" was Smiler's special line.

Drayton, passing a street corner, heard a sudden flurry of running feet. He looked round and cried a warning; but the man who ran so blindly, head down and arms swinging, up the side-road, cannoned into him, rammed him, bowled him over. For a moment he was on his back, and his assailant was sprawling and struggling on top of him. Then the footsteps pelted on up the road, and Drayton, winded and dizzy, got to his feet.

Smiler had been disappointed in his dreams of wealth, but what small contribution Drayton was in a position to make he thankfully received.

It was some little time before Drayton's natural optimism began to reassert itself. To be robbed of his all—his very hard-earned all—when almost in sight, as it were, of his destination, was a blow that, for the moment at least, reduced him to despair. Still, he thought, as he walked slowly across Waterloo Bridge, he had the gloves. They might very easily have vanished with the money. It was, perhaps, a good omen, a sign that this—yes, definitely unlucky day would yet end happily.

For several minutes, think as he might, he could evolve no method of reaching Woking without sacrificing the gloves. He was determined to keep the gloves. When everything else—overcoat, money, ticket—basely deserted him, what alone remained faithful? The gloves! Besides, he had decided that Julia rather liked them. "Don't you worry," he said, patting his distorted coat-pocket. "We shan't pawn you."

It was then that he bent down to retrieve a small white fragment from between two of the stone balustrades of the bridge. He smiled. He could have sung. He had thought of a plan that needed but one penny

for its successful issue, and the penny, he considered, was almost in his grasp.

An hour had passed, and London had yet to disgorge the necessary penny. The sharp-faced young man who had been inspecting the caricatures of notabilities chalked in so dashing a style on the Embankment pavement shifted his feet and coughed. The seated figure showed no sign of life.

"I say," said the young man. Drayton looked up involuntarily, then lowered his head and pulled his hat further over his eyes. The other whistled. "I say," he said again, and this time an ominous note of triumph had crept into his voice, "I believe I know you. Aren't you Drayton, the painter? I'm Stone, of *The Daily Sun*. Look here, don't refuse to answer. Are you doing this for a bet? With 'a well-known sporting peer,' now. That'd make a thundering good story. Wouldn't it, now? And think of the advertisement!"

Drayton thought of the advertisement; he also thought of what certain distinguished colleagues would think of it. A groan burst from his lips, and was changed, a little too late, into a cough. "Dunno what you're talking abaht, guv'nor," he muttered into his upturned collar.

The young man shook his head. "Not very convincing," he said judicially. "I believe you *are* Drayton. Honestly, now, I can't afford to miss this. 'Well-known Artist's Escapade,' 'R.A.'s Embankment Bet'! Eh? Picture on back page." A thought seemed to burst upon him with paralysing brilliance. "Picture on back page!" he whispered, and incontinently vanished.

Drayton very slowly raised his head, cautious and distrustful as a tortoise that has been pestered by a terrier. Yes, the young man had gone; but he would return, and with him would come a creature viler yet, with a camera.

As Drayton bent forward, searching the Embankment eastwards for the first sign of his persecutors, something tinkled at his side. He turned, his heart in his mouth. A penny was still spinning on the pavement. A solid, prosperous old gentleman was marching slowly down the Embankment, a fine, promiscuous charity written, as it seemed to Drayton, in every line of his broad back. With one bound Drayton was on his feet. Clutching the penny tightly in his hand, he glanced eastwards again and saw two distant figures, one strangely laden,

clutching at his precariously balanced hat; but Drayton ran on, laughing, and gained the bridge in time to see his pursuers toiling along the Embankment below.

The train roared through Surbiton, swaying gently in its mile-a-minute gait. "First stop Woking!" Drayton chanted in time with the song of the wheels. "First stop Woking! Nothing can hold me now."

Esher flashed by, and Walton and Weybridge. Six miles more, and then— A chilly sense of imminent unpleasantness began to weigh on



"'Henry,' said Julia, and her voice made the words that followed a caress, 'you awful and unmitigated liar!'"

that waved to him and broke into a run then he threw back his head and laughed and raced towards Waterloo Bridge.

"Heaven reward you!" he shouted, as he passed his benefactor. The old gentleman gasped and tottered sideways,

Drayton's mind. What would they do to him at Woking? What *did* they do to people who travelled on express trains with platform tickets?

Best, he decided, to own up like a man. "Look here, I had the misfortune to lose my note-case, and it was imperative that I should catch this train. Willing to make full restitution. Staying with Mr. Bellingham, at Long Cottage, Hook Heath." Something like that.

Byfleet had passed, and the train was slowing. A signal box sailed smoothly by the carriage windows. "Dash it," said Drayton to himself, "what is there to be afraid of? It can't be worse than what has gone before." It was hard, though, to be brave on such an empty stomach. He wished that fraudulent travelling had a less unpleasant name.

He found himself in a queue at the barrier. In front of him residents were crossly flicking wallets open. "Season!" they muttered. "Season!" Drayton rehearsed his speech. Sweetly reasonable, that was the note. "Look here——"

His turn next. He took a deep breath. Suddenly a grin spread across his face, and was instantly suppressed; he assumed an air of mutinous impatience. His hand came out of his pocket. A white card flashed under the inspector's nose and was withdrawn. "Season!" he grumbled.

"Your ticket, *please*." The remark was addressed to the man behind him.

Out in the station yard Drayton slipped the square of printed cardboard back into his pocket. "Good old Incubus!" he murmured. "Never failed me yet. Was ever a name less justified?"

He decided, as he walked through the growing darkness towards Hook Heath,

that he would certainly buy a first-class season to Woking. It was the least he could do.

\* \* \* \* \*

"But, Henry," said Julia, "there's one thing I don't understand." She was holding the gloves up to her face, looking over them with eyes that sparkled mischievously, and she made a picture that was all that Drayton had imagined it.

"No?" he asked, wondering what was coming next.

"Why did you come to-day? You surely knew my birthday was to-morrow?"

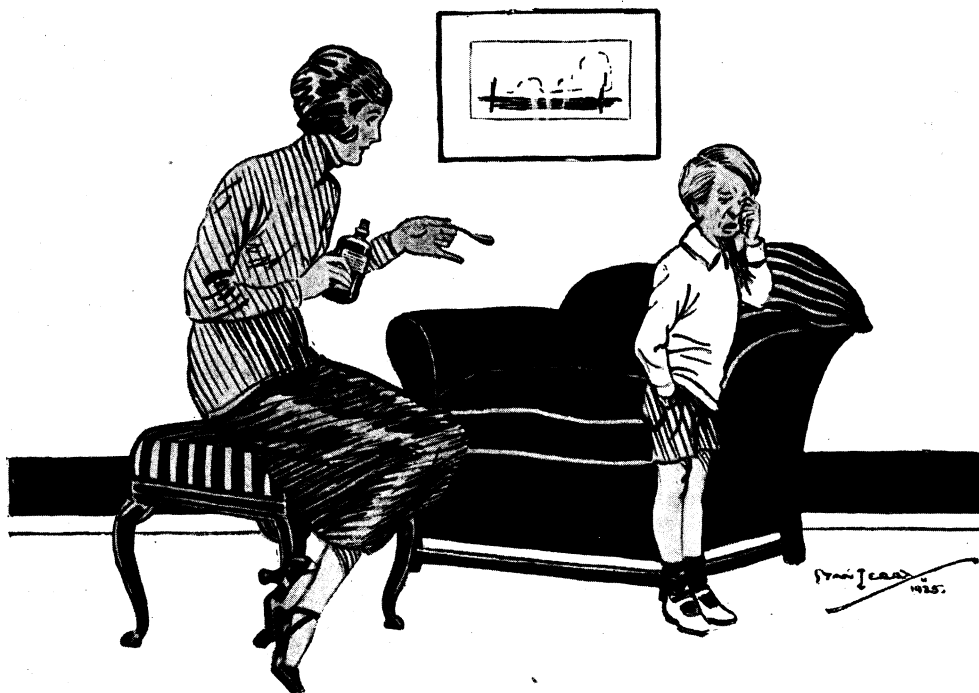
Drayton felt the ground rock under his feet. Little red sparks whirled and danced before his eyes, and there was a clamorous singing in his ears. So he'd come a mucker, after all! Fool, fool! He could have wept. Well, he had already sinned against the Mendicancy and Railway Acts; now for a little lying—and to Julia, too.

He laughed. "Of course I knew." He said it with a finished nonchalance that disgusted him. "Only—I wanted you to myself, you see. Birthdays mean crowds, I've always found——"

She dropped her fur-gloved hands and let him see her face. He read laughter there, and understanding, and much besides. "Henry," said Julia, and her voice made the words that followed a caress, "you awful and unmitigated liar! My birthday was on the eighth—ten long days and nights ago—and I was beginning to think that you would never come.

"Oh, my Hilary Dowson," she said a little later, when some part, at least, of that dire day's mishaps had been unfolded, "I never knew a man less fit to be trusted with a wife—or more in need of one!"





THE CATCH IN IT.

MOTHER: Now, Peter, you're going to take your medicine like a man, aren't you?  
 PETER: No fear! It says *two t-tablespoons* for a *m-man* on the *b-bottle*!

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### JANE AND THE *POT-AU-FEU*.

By B. A. Clarke.

UNTIL I read "French Housewives" in last Monday night's *Planet*, I considered Jane more than competent. An only daughter, she enjoyed (or suffered) an intensive cultivation in domesticity by her mother, the depository, as I have thought hitherto, of all that is known upon the subject. But the exposure of my wife's ignorance throws doubt upon her instructor. Subjected to the searching bacon rind test, for example, would my mother-in-law come out of it any better than my poor Jane did?

Last Monday evening, I bought the six o'clock edition of *The Planet* at the railway bookstall, and opened it in a third-class smoker. The first thing to catch my eye was an appreciation of French housewives. It made sad reading, proving that England has no home-makers worthy the name. "What," said the writer, "would be a Frenchwoman's scorn if told of our English wives' wastage of bacon rind, which, in her own thrifty house-keeping, not only serves as an invaluable constituent of the *pot-au-feu*, from which, at not a sou's cost, she produces for the delectation of

the *bonhomme* a most nutritious *potage*, but also in multifarious other ways too numerous to mention?"

Having been the first in the carriage to read "French Housewives," I was able to observe its effect upon the other passengers as one by one they came to it, to watch the light fade from their faces as they learnt how unworthy their wives were of them.

One, a retired Anglo-Indian, whom I knew very slightly, let his *Planet* fall into his lap and glared around.

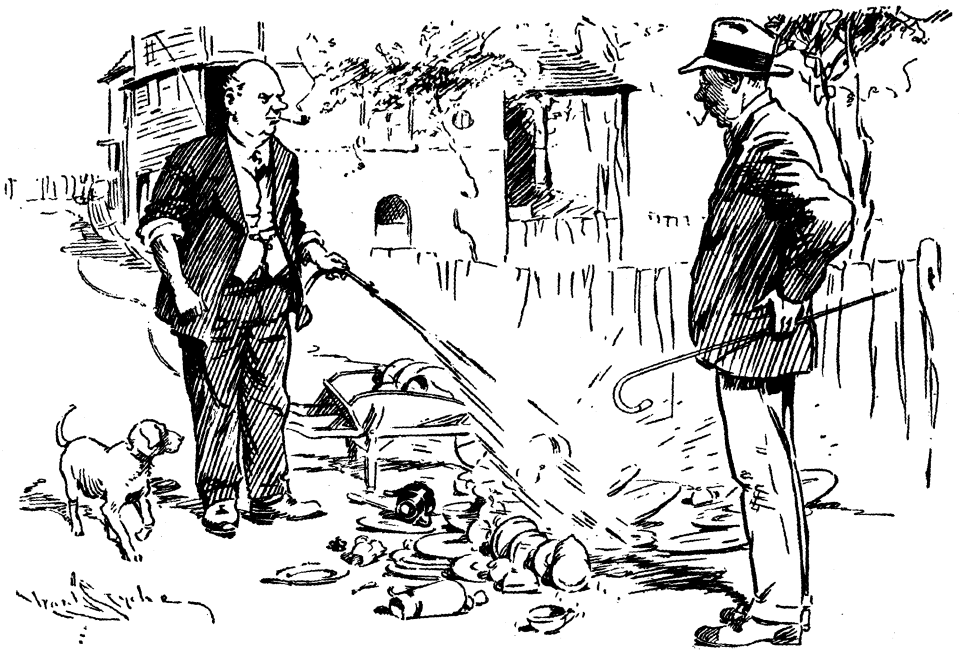
I touched his knee.

"I see, Colonel, you also have been reading this exposure of English housekeeping. How does it strike you?"

In a tone more of anger than of sorrow he replied: "The thought of all that wastage of good breakfast blood makes my bacon boil in my veins, sir! I mean it makes my blood boil in my bacon to think of all that wastage of good veins. Not that, either—you know what I am trying to say."

I did know, but thought him mistaken. In a measure we English husbands were to blame for not having given more supervision to what goes on in our kitchens.

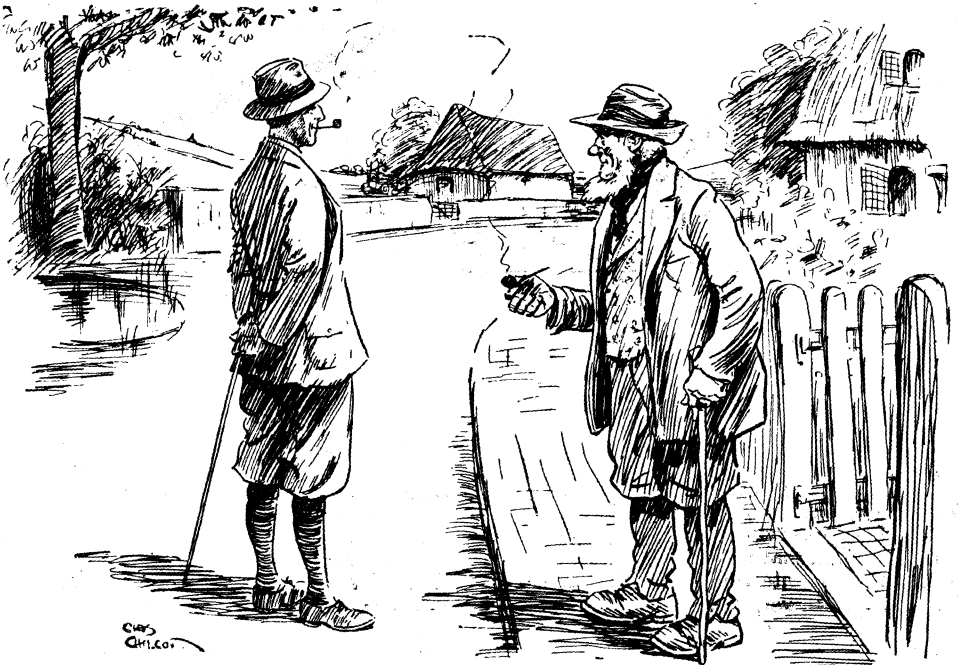




GETTING READY.

"HULLO, old man, what's the game?"

"My wife comes home to-morrow, and I must get everything spick and span."



SUPERIORITY.

SMITH (up and out at 5.30 a.m.): What a glorious morning!

NATIVE (contemptuously): It *wos*, zur.



When I reached home Jane opened the door.

"What do you do with our bacon rind?" I demanded.

"The cat has it."

"The cat! You mean to tell me that you feed a common cat upon—"

"A half-Persian, if you please!"

"And a half not Persian, remember! You stand there and can tell me, without a blush, that you feed half a common cat—I mean a half common cat, or, more correctly still, a cat which—"

"That."

"A partially common cat," I continued, dodging the suggested emendation, "upon bacon rind! Do you know what a French housewife does with her bacon rind?"

"What does she do with it?"

"Multifarious things."

"Do you mean she makes *things* with it—bootlaces, catapults? I must have details."

"A French housewife's uses of bacon rind are too numerous to mention."

"Do you mean too numerous to mention in full, or too numerous to mention in part? How can anything be that? Give some samples."

"For one thing, bacon rind is invaluable in the Frenchwoman's *pot-au-feu*. But I forgot. An English housewife—save the mark!—does not know what that is. It is the pot that is always kept on, into which the Frenchwoman drops scraps of every kind, and from which, at no cost whatever, she produces a nutritious *potage*."

"Who has the *potage*—the cat?"

"Heavens, no! The *bonhomme*."

"Well, my good man, if you are so anxious to eat cat's food, you can have what is in its saucer now, and pussy can have your Dover



THE INITIAL PERIL.

"How were you out, George?"

"L.B.W."

"Oh, hush, dear—someone will hear you."

sole, for I suppose even in France cats have to be given something to eat. You say the pot is always on. What sort of gas bill are you asking me to run up? Except for the Sunday joint, my gas stove isn't alight more than an hour and a half a day."

"You misunderstand me, wilfully, I fear. When I said the *pot-au-feu* was always on, I meant on the *tapis*, as it were—always ready to receive whatever is going."

"Does *feu* mean *tapis*?"

I thrust *The Planet* into Jane's hand.

"Here, read the article for yourself and get some faint inkling of what is meant by domestic science."

Having served my supper—the Dover sole



THE EXPLANATION.

MOTHER: I can't understand why we have all this fuss every morning. When I was a little girl, I used to look forward to going to school and seeing all my friends.

DAUGHTER: I've only got one friend, and I hate her.



RESIGNATION.

"I THINK I'll break two more clubs and then go home."

was cooked to a turn, I must admit that—Jane retired with the evening paper into the kitchen, whence, before long, came sounds of a young woman crying herself into hysterics, or laughing herself into tears—apparently the former—for when Jane came in to clear away, she humbly begged me to bear with her wastefulness another three or four days (the poor child!), after which there would be no further cause for complaint. Later on I learned that the new *régime* was to start the following Sunday.

For my next Sunday breakfast I found awaiting me, in the place of my usual three rashers of Wiltshire, one fried frying egg!

(You can never convince a woman that a

#### IF IT WEREN'T—

Inspired by a morning tiff.

If it weren't for other people  
I should jog along the way,  
And enjoy the simple pleasures  
That adorn my simple day.  
For I've never been ambitious  
In a more than modest line,  
And the man who's avaricious  
Has no sympathy of mine.

If it weren't for rates and taxes,  
And the ogre known as rent,  
All my heart would be illumined  
With the sunshine of content.



TWO OF THEM.

COUNTY CRICKETER (having recently taken up golf): How's that?

"recommended" egg fried isn't equal in every respect to an English new-laid egg "guaranteed" similarly cooked.)

And this was Jane's idea of stopping the wastage of bacon rind—debaring me from the one breakfast relish that I enjoy!

Ostentatiously, and it seemed to me derisively, she dropped the egg-shell into a large saucepan.

"The formal opening of my *pot-au-feu*, from which, in due course, I shall produce for the delectation of my *bonhomme* a nutritious *potage*. But as this involves my putting the cat upon board-wages, you must raise my housekeeping allowance half-a-crown a week."



"You can tell a man's profession by his walk," says a writer. For instance, if you see a man walking on his hands, ten chances to one he's an acrobat.

If it weren't for lack of patience  
(Periodically shown)  
In a certain gentle lady,  
I should never lose my own.

It is therefore quite apparent,  
Or I've tried to make it such,  
That the ways of other people  
Are responsible for much;  
Yet on one or two occasions  
I have heard this lady say:  
"If you would but do less grousing,  
I should have a cheerful day."

John Lea.



AN eminent scientific professor states that the earth is hollow. But it must be nearly full of lost golf balls by this time.

## THE RÔLE.

*By Ralph Wotherspoon.*

"It's fancy dress," said my wife. "What are you going as?"

"Oh, I don't know," I replied. "What do I usually go as?"

"You usually go as seldom as you can, but this time I'm jolly well going to drag you there."

I never argue with Betty; the most I do is to wait for her to contradict herself.

"What are *you* going as?" I inquired tenderly.

"Pierrette, probably."

"Well, it doesn't matter. What are *you* going as?"

"The Cat Burglar."

"Oh, that's stale!"

"Or possibly Mr. X."

"*Démodé*, old boy."

"Well, I'll think about it, and do things my own way—for once."

"You'd better wear your old pierrot dress," Betty decided. "You know you love putting your hands in your pockets."

This is typical Betty.

"What I decline to put in my pocket," I informed her, "is my pride. I am too proud to be a pierrot. Don't ask me why. In any



TRUE TO TYPE.

"She's a very sociable kind of woman; whenever she has half an hour to spare she goes and visits someone who hasn't."

"There will be a great many pierrettes," I mused. "Very likely too many."

"Well?"

"But none like you, dear."

"Thank you. There'll be lots of pierrots—that's comforting, anyway—just like you if you're going to be one of them. Are you?"

"I am not. My rôle on this occasion will be startlingly original. I shall out-Tupman Tupman. He, if you remember—"

"Yes, yes, he went as a brigand."

"Bandit, dear."

case there will be, as you say, plenty of pierrots—a surfeit, if not a plethora, of the brutes. Bah!"

"I do wish you'd be sensible and settle something."

"I can't settle anything. This is not one of my settling days. What time is dinner? Are we going to have any dinner?"

"Now, don't get angry about it."

"I'm not angry, I'm hungry."

"Ah," said Betty, "I've got an idea."

"Have you? What fun!"

"It is, rather. Suppose you go to the dance and wander about all the time with your mouth open."

"Somebody would look me in it and think I was a gift-horse. Is that your bright idea?"

"No, it isn't. You'd have a hungry look in your eyes, too, like the one you have now."

"And keep my mouth open?"

"And keep your mouth open."

Rapid thought yielded no solution of this cross-talk puzzle.

"I'll buy it," I said, "What am I?"

"Interval for refreshments," my wife replied pleasantly.

a ripping turnip field belonging to someone else quite near."

"It sounds most attractive," I said, "but I was looking for a farm by the sea, not a derelict cottage in the Midlands."



STORIES about clowns were in vogue, following a local circus performance. One concerning a famous clown would have delighted that artist of the flour-paste countenance. Two old ladies, standing in line before the box office, fell to discussing the merits of the various



YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

MOTHER: 'Ow much did you say she gets for singin'?

DAUGHTER: Oh, 'undreds an' 'undreds.

MOTHER: There, now, I told you not to drop your singin' lessons!

#### THE FARM BY THE SEA.

WE have all met the returned holiday-maker who is enthusiastic about the ideal resort he has discovered. But have you noticed there is always a catch somewhere?

A man once told me about a farm by the sea that he knew of. Having been looking for this for years, I pressed for further particulars. "Well," he said, "it's not exactly on the beach, you know. You can get to the sea all right if you don't mind a bit of a walk. It doesn't take so long if you can get a lift on the way."

"How about the farm?" I suggested.

"Oh, the farm? Strictly speaking, I suppose you wouldn't call it a farm exactly. They don't keep any animals except a chicken or two, but the roof had been thatched once, and there is

clowns they had seen. Said one, summing up her impressions of her favourite: "I think I like him best of them all. Such a nice clown! There's nothing vulgar about him—he never makes you laugh."



FROM a science lecture: "Our jaws have dropped half an inch since the days of pre-historic man." Well, look at the weather we have been having lately.



A FASHION note says that hips will come in again this season. Two hips, of course, so the appropriate comment seems to be "Hooray!"

## THE WEDDING GARMENT.

*By Robert K. Risk.*

"Good morning," said Doris cheerfully, as I sat down to breakfast. "I have much pleasure in announcing that your doom is sealed."

"Any particular doom? May I know the worst?"

"You are invited to Cousin Tom's wedding, this day three weeks."

"Surely that is Cousin Tom's doom. I had mine about twenty-five years ago. That is how you are having a free breakfast now with two charming middle-aged people. I refer particularly to the lady on your right, of whom our view is obscured by the morning paper."

"I'm really sorry for you," said Doris.

"No, no, don't apologise."

"I'm sorry you are so slow in seeing what Cousin Tom's wedding means for you."

"A wedding present, of course. But we still have a few of our own that we never did fancy and haven't found homes for."

"Don't you see what it means for you?"

"Rather a boring afternoon, tempered with three glasses of fizz and a cress sandwich."

"You won't get that unless you are suitably dressed. You will have to buy a morning coat. You have procrastinated for years. The Day has come."

"Not while economy holds her seat in this distracted globe. (Hamlet—Wigs by Clarkson.) Not so long as there are morning coats to hire or borrow. Mongoose has one that fits me perfectly. You know we have no rich relatives whose proleptic funerals would justify such an inroad on capital."

So just for this once more I was allowed to borrow from Mongoose. But six months later Doris arranged to lead to the altar young

Jack Tonbridge, having decided that she would rather receive a dress allowance from him than from me, and I feared that sartorially I was "for it."

"No escape this time," said Doris gaily. "The Mongooses have both accepted."

A week or two later the arrival to my address of a tailor-like parcel passed almost unnoticed in the pre-nuptial tornado of cardboard boxes and tissue paper. But Doris



SPOILT.

"You naughty darling, that was my piece!"

found a moment to congratulate me. Now I would "really do credit to me and Jack."

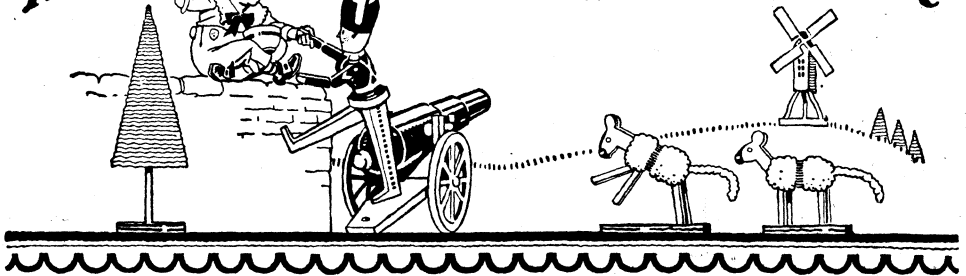
When her wedding reception was at its worst, Doris said to me: "Mrs. Mongoose is here, but she tells me her husband was unavoidably detained at his office."

"I know he was," I said. "But he has sent you such a friendly wire of congratulation."

"Why didn't you show it to me at once?"



# The Adventures of Corporal Timbertoe and his Gun



This part  
is for  
Children  
to read



If Parents  
don't begin  
here, they're  
cheating



The Corporal climbed on the garden wall,  
With his gun he was going to sup  
With Little Tom Tucker who sang as he sat  
Beating time with his spoon on his cup  
"O, my corn is a-grinding down at the mill.  
I'll bake my bread and I'll turn until  
My churn with beautiful butter I fill.  
Then I'll eat my supper all up I will;  
My white bread and butter all up."  
But the Corporal said, "Far better than bread,  
Or butter, or biscuits, or buns,  
For supper or tea, you may take it from me,  
Is the Food that's shot from Guns!"

The story of how these Foods are shot from guns is told  
fully on the packets.

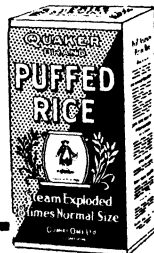
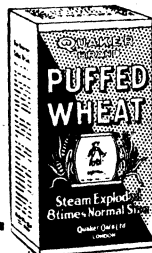
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Get a packet of each to-day and see which you like the better.

## Puffed Wheat

Your Grocer sells both kinds.



## Puffed Rice

Made & Guaranteed by Quaker Oats Ltd. London.



THE WINNING WEIGHT.

By Theta.

THE conversation of the two men in the corner of the railway carriage could hardly fail to interest Mr. Cornelius Pink. They so obviously knew what they were talking about, and that, in these days of political discussion, is rare.

They were clearly of that favoured band to whom a horse confides its innermost secrets even while maintaining a non-committal attitude to its owner, its trainer, and the imaginative souls who supply the midday specials.

"There's no doubt about it," one of them was saying. "He's caught the handicapper napping."

"I'm not so sure," said the other. "Look at his form at Sandown. Last in a field of seventeen isn't what I call convincing."

"That may be, but everyone knows he wasn't really trying."

"Except to them what backed him," put in his friend. But the expert went on—

"I tell you at seven stone six he's an absolute snip next Tuesday." And he went on to announce his intention of putting the whole of his underwear on the quadruped in question. His appearance, as a matter of fact, did not suggest that even then the poor thing would be any too warm, though, as Mr. Pink reflected, if many others did the same, it could hardly avoid becoming a hot favourite.

Cornelius was not a racing man, and consequently he was not much worried by the fact that the name of this favoured animal had been mentioned, if at all, at some point in the conversation when he was not listening. It was more from force of habit than anything else that he noted the magic weight 7.6 on a scrap of paper.

For he was an inveterate note-taker. His pockets were generally full of pencilled sub-

stitutes for the memory which he ought to have cultivated, and his local laundry always found his shirt-cuffs almost as enthralling as the reminiscences of a society leader.

When his travelling companions had left the carriage, Cornelius thought idly of their words. Next Tuesday was the day on which Marguerite was coming up to London. That in itself was enough to make it a lucky day for him, and a lucky day was obviously the one on which to



JUST AS WELL.

MAC: "Released on Saterdag!" It seems tae me it's a guid job we're gaun back tae Auchtermuchty on Friday nicht.

have a little flutter. The more he thought of it, the more inclined he felt to depart from his normal habits and, for once, have a little bit on—not a whole shirt, of course—for he was no plunger—but, say, a detachable cuff or one of his spare collar studs.

It ought not to be difficult to spot the name of the horse to which the handicapper had been so lenient, and as soon as he had finished dinner he took out his slip of paper and began the search.

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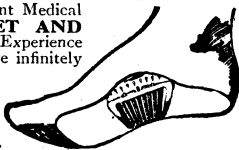
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*Kindly mention The Windsor Magazine.*

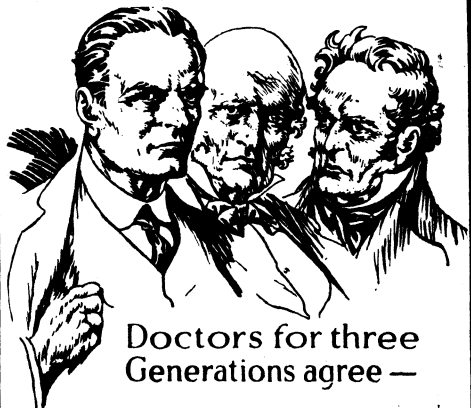


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As he had anticipated, it was easy enough. Guided by the figures he had noted, his choice fell on Chocolate Eclair, and it only remained to place the commission.

"He hasn't an earthly, old man," he was assured by the fellow-clerk whom he consulted next day. "It's simply helping a bookie to pay supertax."

"On the contrary," Cornelius retorted, "it is qualifying him for outdoor relief." To which the other responded that if he handed over the bob he would get it put on for him.

Cornelius never had any real doubt about the result. It was his lucky day, but, none the less, it was not without elation that he set out to meet Marguerite's train on Tuesday evening. For Chocolate Eclair had romped home, justifying his name, as one critic put it, by slipping down the course as if it were a waistcoat.

He was nice and early for the train, as behoves the lover who knows that the punctuality of his adored is not in her own hands, but, even so, it was a surprise to be informed by the porter, of whom he had asked the platform of its arrival, that he had over an hour to wait.

"An hour?" said Cornelius incredulously.

"Yes, sir. The Muddleton express isn't due till eight five," and he added, as Cornelius muttered something about *éclair*s, that the tea-room was on Platform One.

But Mr. Cornelius Pink was not thinking of tea at all. What he had begun to say to the porter was that, by a strange coincidence, eight five was the weight of his afternoon's winner. He remembered noting the figures on a scrap of paper, just such a scrap as that on which he had jotted down the time of Marguerite's train. And now, recalling that he had come to the station to meet a seven six train, he almost began to doubt if the gentleman in the railway carriage had really known what he was talking about, after all. In these days of *vers libre* such knowledge is very rare.



"JAM finishers" are being advertised for by a firm of preserve makers. We know several

[Facing Third Cover.]

small boys who would like to volunteer their services.



It has been discovered that an onion a day is even more beneficial than an apple a day. It not only keeps the doctor away, but everybody else.



CUSTOMER: That spring lamb you sent me was rather tough.

BUTCHER: To tell you the truth, madam, that joint came off a pet lamb, which was spoilt through being made such a fuss of.



THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT.

PEDESTRIAN: How soon can one reckon on getting to Brimblecombe?  
NATIVE: 'Alf an hour—or twenty minutes—depends which on ye it is.

JEAN AGASSIZ, the famous Swiss-American naturalist, was in the habit of keeping strange pets in strange places. One morning Mrs. Agassiz arose and proceeded, according to custom, to put on her stockings and shoes.

At a certain stage of this process a little scream attracted Mr. Agassiz' attention, and, not having yet risen, he leaned forward anxiously upon his elbow, inquiring what was the matter.

"Why, a little snake has just crawled out of my boot!" cried she.

"Only one, my dear?" interrupted the professor, calmly lying down again. "There should have been three."

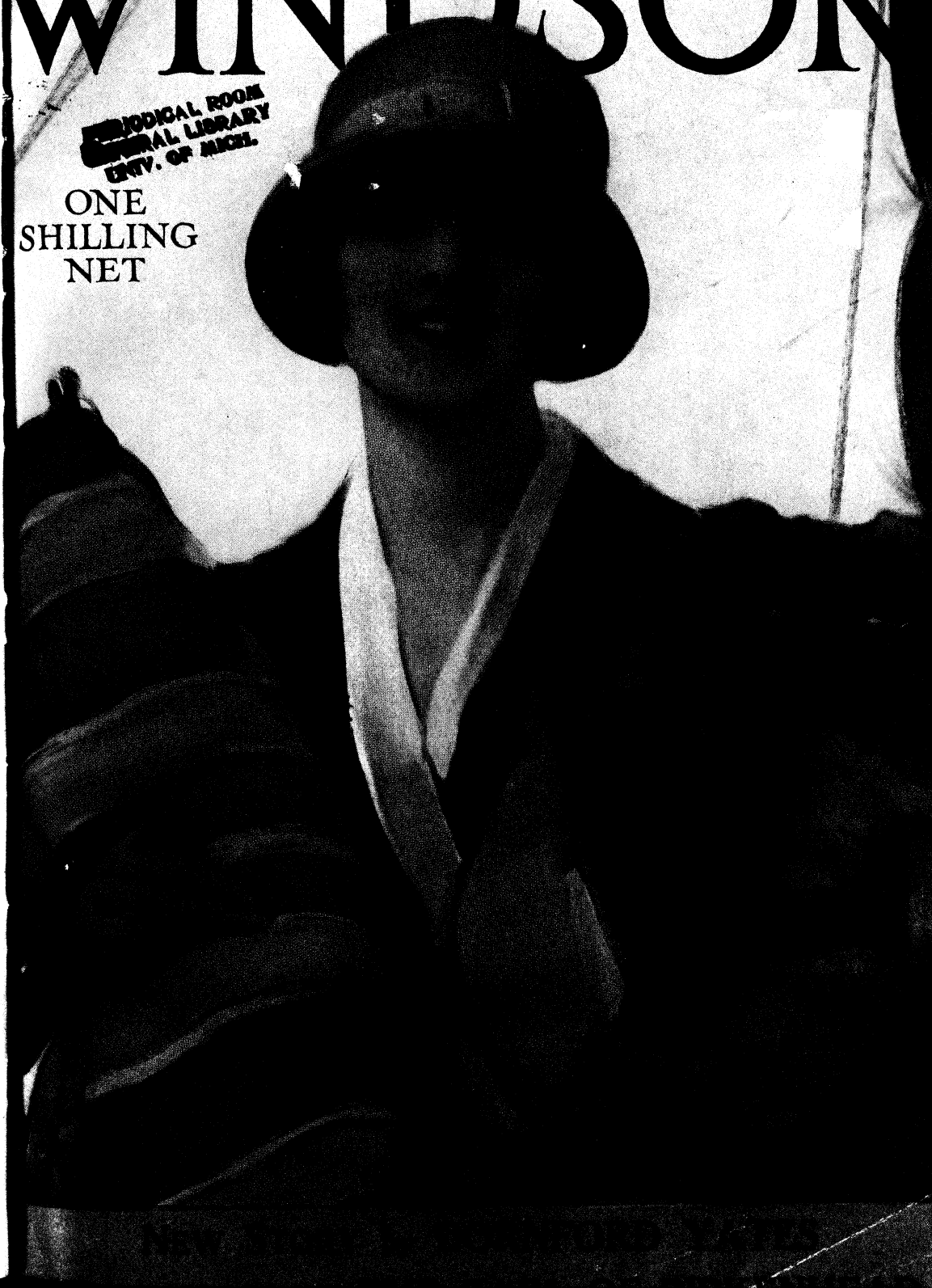
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It is a gift worthy of your acceptance, and will assuredly give that exclusive "touch of fashion" to any toilet. Made of finest quality poult-de-soie, ruched, it is lined with silks of contrasting colours. The fastening is a strong nickel-plated one, and the bag is made with an inner division and has a captive mirror.

All you have to do is to save the boxes in which Wright's Coal Tar Soap is sold (1/6 per box of 3 tablets) and the printed wrappers round the soap.

When 20 boxes have been collected, cut the yellow oval pictures of the soap and send with the 60 printed wrappers to "*HANDBAGS*," Dept. 10, Wright, Layman & Umney, Ltd., Southwark, London, S.E. 1.

*A Lady from Blackpool writes: I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th inst., and also your parcel of to-day's post, and wish to avail myself of the earliest opportunity of expressing my appreciation of both.*

*The bag dispatched by you is really beautiful, and far exceeds my highest expectations. Please accept my very sincere thanks for your kindness, courtesy, and promptitude.*

*Wright's Coal Tar Soap is sold in boxes of three tablets, each of which is enclosed in two wrappers, one plain, one bearing printed matter. Please refuse all soap offered you unwrapped or unboxed.*







A DOWNLAND MILL: FRISTON.  
*A photographic study by Percy G. Luck.*



"There was no doubt about it. The case contained two cigarettes, one at each end of the slide."

# THE PAYING OF PAUL

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "*As Other Men Are*," "*And Five Were Foolish*," "*Berry and Co.*," "*Valerie French*," "*The Brother of Daphne*," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"If you simply must know," said Patricia, "I sold my rings."  
Simon lay back on his pillows and closed his eyes.

His wife put up a hand and touched his hair.

"I sold my rings," she said gently, "to save your life. Was that such a great thing to do? My husband . . . my man . . . the only thing in my world was terribly ill. If he was to live, he must have the very best

that money could buy. The doctors said so. And we hadn't the money to buy the very best. Was I to fold my hands and let you die—see my world go west for a couple of rings?"

"Oh, no," said Simon wearily. "If it was me or the rings, the rings were bound to go. But you had so few nice things—because you would marry me. And the thought that I've pouched—"

The cool hand slid over his mouth.

Copyright, 1925, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.



"Is there one law for you and another for me? Once, before we were married, when I was engaged to be married to somebody else, I seem to remember you paid ten thous—"

"Hush," said Simon, avoiding the little palm. "Between friends . . ."

"Aren't we still friends, my darling?"

Simon lifted his head, and husband and wife looked each other in the eyes. And there, I suppose, each found something which was above rubies, for presently they smiled very tenderly, and Patricia rose and kissed him upon the lips.

Mr. and Mrs. Beaulieu had been married for just six months. Of these the first four had been most happy. With marriage had come a poverty such as the girl had not dreamed of and Simon had never known, but the two had seen it coming and laughed it to scorn. This derision was sound. 'Out of the eater came forth meat.' Their love, being proof against the assault of indigence, began to wax fat upon the discipline which it imposed. Their little flat at Chartres, the earnings of Simon's pen, the ritual of housekeeping, their humble extravagances, the prospective possession of a baby car, above all, the absence of any company except their own—these things and others drew the two closer together than could have any stalled ox. Each found the married state a privy pleasure, happily walled against a staggering world.

So for four months.

Then Simon had fallen sick of typhoid fever.

Not until he was seriously ill had the disease been recognised. Instantly Patricia, steady-eyed as ever, but actually frightened to death, had wired for an ambulance and taken him straight to a Paris nursing-home. But for her action the wife must have been a widow. The fever was followed by inflammation of the lungs. . . .

But now all that was over. Death had slunk back to his kennel, and, if the weather held, Simon was to drive out in two days' time.

"To-morrow," announced Patricia, seating herself on the bed, "to-morrow I go to Chartres. Only for the day, of course. But there's work to be done."

Her husband opened his eyes.

"What work, my lady?"

Patricia regarded her beautiful fingernails.

"This morning," she said, "I had a talk with Durand,"

Simon frowned.

"What did he say?"

"He said that you had the finest constitution of any man or woman he'd ever seen, but he added that such an illness must leave its mark." Simon shifted uneasily. "He says there's no reason on earth, if we do as he says, why in a year's time you shouldn't be stronger than before, but—but one of your lungs is touched, dear, and we've got to go South." Simon groaned. "Southern, mountainous air and an outdoor life—that's his prescription."

"On three hundred pounds a year?"

"I didn't go into details, but he volunteered that the nearer we got to Nature the better we'd be. His words were, 'The age is against you, because it's a luxurious age. If you could live like the gipsies . . .' He stopped there and threw his hands up in the air. I made him go on. 'What if we could?' I said. He drew himself up and bowed. 'Madam,' he said, 'for you the world would become the Garden of Eden, and all who saw you would think you were Adam and Eve.'"

Simon fingered his chin, with a light in his eyes.

"Under the greenwood tree," he murmured. "Viewed from this luxurious apartment, it's an attractive idea."

"I may as well say," said Patricia, "that I'm simply crazy to try." Her tone was vibrant. "I've thought it all out, Simon. A tiny car and a tent and the open road. South by easy stages—go as you please. Spring's here and Summer is coming, and the Winter's far enough off to look out for itself. Besides, by then—who knows? And we'd live more cheaply like that than any way I know."

"I agree," said Simon, "once we've got the car. But there goes a hundred at least, if we don't want junk."

"If we could let the flat. . . ."

"We ought to do that on our heads, but we shan't get a hundred down. Never mind. A car's not essential. We don't want to rush. But I don't think we ought to ramble into the blue. I know Winter's six months off, but—"

"Supposing we aimed for—for Etchecuria."

"Etchecuria?" said Simon. "What do you know of Etchecuria?"

"Nothing, my dear," said Patricia, "except that it's mountainous and south. That's why I want to go." Her voice began to tremble and she laid a hand on his knee.

"I believe it's wonderful, Simon. I met a man once who'd been there. He was very quiet about it, but he said he was going back. And when I said 'Why?' he laughed. 'Because,' he said, 'I've a weakness for fairy-tales.'"

"I can't equal that," said Simon, with his eyes on the eager face. "But I've heard of it vaguely, you know. I always had an idea it was really only a name, the ancient name of a tract between France and Spain that was once a No Man's Land, but was swallowed up years ago by one or the other or both."

Patricia shook her head.

"He said he'd been there," she insisted. "And he wasn't pulling my leg. And he said there weren't any railways or even roads. But, I tell you, he wouldn't talk, and I never saw him again."

"That's good enough," said Simon. "When can we start?"

"You like the idea?"—anxiously.

"My darling, the germ of adventure is in my blood. It only wants waking up. And now you've done it. I'm all agog an' stampin' to take the road."

Before the girl could reply, came a knock on the door.

"Durand," said Simon.

Patricia slid down from the bed. . . .

"Ah, doctor," said Simon, "come in. How soon shall I be well?"

The doctor smiled. Then he turned to Patricia.

"You have told him what I recommended?"

"I have told him everything."

"Good," said Durand, sitting down by the side of the bed. "And how do you like my orders?"

"Sleepin' out?" said Simon. "It'll suit me down to the ground. Can I go forth to-morrow? We want to choose a tent."

"No," said Durand. "You may not. And when you do you are not going to choose any tent. If you did, you would be choosing your tomb. The summer is coming. Oh, yes. And supposing it rains. When you put up your tent in the rain you do not dry the earth."

"Then how——"

"Listen. It is this very thing that I have come for. Well, now, if you like, I have a friend. He is a rich American, and I will tell you what he has got. I know because I have seen it. A caravan. It has a kitchen and a bathroom, and you drag it behind a car. He will never use it, of course. He

bought it for a whim. Now, if you like, I shall ask him to lend it to you. You see, you must 'ave the air, but still you must care for yourself until you are strong. And I do not want you to go to any hotel. They are all full of germs and steam-heat. And a tent is the devil for a man in your state."

The Beaulieus regarded each other.

"It's awfully kind of you, doctor," said Patricia slowly. "Most awfully kind, but just at the moment I'm afraid we haven't a car."

"But——"

"Or a chauffeur," said Simon swiftly. "An' with me on light duty a chauffeur 'd be a necessity. Besides, you'd want the deuce of a powerful car."

"But there is a car to the van," cried Durand. "But of course. It is specially made, with great cushions behind—*tampons* and very low gears. And it makes a bed for the chauffeur. You never saw such comfort. I tell you it is *de luxe*. And my friend would send a chauffeur certainly. He has ten or twelve. I should not ask him without, because to be responsible for such an elephant would spoil everything."

Again the Beaulieus sought each other's eyes.

At length—

"Well," said Simon, "if you really think he'd be inclined to befriend two complete strangers to this amazing extent——"

"I have only to ask him."

"—for perhaps a month. . . ."

"A month? A year if you please. He will never use it. Then that is a good thing settled. And it is a fine time of year to take the road. You must make South, of course."

"That's right," said Patricia. "We thought of going to Etchechuria."

The doctor sat up.

"Etchechuria?" he said, and laughed.

"An ideal place—if you can find it. I have certainly seen it printed on a very old map, but I am afraid it does not exist anywhere else. In France we call it 'The Lost Country.' Still, it was well situated, and while you are looking for it your husband will become well. And the longer you look, the better he will be."

"I believe it is to be found," said Patricia stoutly. "I once met an Englishman who said he'd been there."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"I know," he said, "there are tales. But—I do not want to dash your hopes—but I think it is fabulous. You cannot hide



five thousand square kilometres in Southern Europe to-day. It is unthinkable."

"No harm in looking," said Simon doggedly.

"On the contrary, a great deal of good. The air down there is the best for you in the world, and if you are looking for countries, you must be out of doors."

Patricia laughed.

"'One moment,' said Mrs. Beaulieu. 'You say it's a rotten life. Why don't you turn it down?'"

"Doctor Durand," she said, "don't shatter our dreams. Admit there's a shred of mystery still clinging to the name."

The doctor removed his pince-nez and weighed them upon his palm.

"Listen," he said. "I am a practical man and I do not believe that Etchecuria exists. It existed once, of course: that can be



"How can I? I've got to live. And I've never done anything else. . . . and our crowd doesn't believe in reformation. You've got to "go on or go under"—because you know too much."

proved. It was once a little country between France and Spain: but, instead of being conquered, it gradually lost its—its individuality. Its people intermarried with the

Spaniards and the French: its boundaries began to disappear: France gradually advanced from the North and Spain from the South until at last they met, and

Etchechuria was gone. That is my belief. . . . Still, there is one strange thing." He hesitated. Then he sat back and crossed his legs. "You ask for a shred of mystery. Well, here it is. In England you have no frontiers, but it is different with us. Now, when a survey of France has been made, the officials who have surveyed the frontier exchange their conclusions with those who have surveyed the frontier from the opposite side, to see that their measurements shall agree at the border-line. That is easy to understand. Very well. Now, this I know—that our surveyors and the Spaniards' cannot agree. I know that at one point in the mountains there is a long discrepancy between the two surveys for which nobody can account. Each set, of course, says it is the other's fault. Each says the other has looked at the wrong peaks or something. Yet neither are fools, and, except at this one place, their conclusions agree."

There was a silence.

Presently—

"That's very strange," said Simon. "Why don't they go to the spot and fight it out?"

Durand shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands.

Then he rose to his feet.

"I cannot tell," he said. "I can only suppose. Listen. If a tradesman sends you a bill and when you read it you see that he has added badly and made a mistake in your favour, what do you do?"

"I point it out—like a fool."

"Exactly," said Doctor Durand, with his hand on the door. "But then you are not a patriotic surveyor about his country's business."

The next moment he was gone.

Simon stared at the door. Then he turned to Patricia with a bewildered air.

"Now, what on earth," he said, "does he mean by that?"

"He must mean," said Patricia, "that each country thinks that the other has made a mistake against itself. If it was the other way round, they'd raise Cain. But, as it is, each is perfectly happy to let the matter drop. What I can't see is how any mistake in surveying can be for or against either side."

With a far-away look in his eyes, Simon fingered his chin.

Suddenly his hand shot out.

"I've got it," he cried. "Of course!"

"What?"

"Oh, hold me," cried Simon. "It's too wonderful. I can't think how I'm so wise."

Patricia was laughing and hanging on to his arm.

"Tell me, tell me."

"Look here," said Simon excitedly. "If France thought the Spanish surveyors had made a mistake about the frontier-line—set it too far from Madrid, France'd go off the deep end, wouldn't she? And if Spain thought the French surveyors had set it too far South, Spain'd go up in smoke. But if France is perfectly satisfied that *Spain's set it too far South* and if Spain is equally sure that *France has set it too far North*, each bein' convinced that the other is doin' his own crowd down, each of them laughs in his sleeve an' says '*Tant mieux.*'"

"Yes, I see that. Go on."

"Well, my lady, don't scream, but *supposing they're both of them right.*"

Patricia put a hand to her head.

"You mean . . ."

Simon leaned forward.

"If Spain is right in drawing the frontier-line five miles South of where France thinks it should be; and France is right in putting it five miles North of where Spain thinks it should be, it follows that *there must exist five miles of No Man's Land.*"

Patricia clapped hands to her mouth and ceased to breathe.

"Oh, Simon," she whispered at length, "d'you think it's true?"

"My dear," said Simon, "I don't know. But as soon as ever I'm fit I'm going—to—see."

\* \* \* \* \*

Six weeks had gone by, and Mr. and Mrs. Beaulieu were on the open road.

June was in, after a weeping May, and the countryside was stuffed so full of time-honoured scents as to burst the fine green jacket she had of Spring.

If Simon was yet unsound, only a stethoscope could have perceived the fact. He lived and moved and looked as they did in the Eclogues.

Beaulieu was tall and well made, bearing himself upright yet easily, a notable figure of a man. He had a curious dignity of movement, going smoothly about his business with something of the calm confidence of the Persian cat. His thick hair was dark and carefully brushed: his eyes were clear and grey, and his voice pleasing: a very charming expression distinguished his clean-cut face. He was a man of principle and looked it: his courage was high and his manners were naturally handsome. He could be grave, much preferred to be gay,

was frank with all the world and found unexpectedly childlike by those who knew him well. Yet it was hard to deceive him, for he walked with his eyes open and his ears pricked, and he had a trick of looking you full in the face with a steady, level gaze which took some facing.

For all their eagerness to search for 'The Lost Country,' the two kept their fair heads. Etchechuria might be their goal, but, if the way there was rosy, to show impatience to arrive would be the act of a fool. Herrick knew.

They wandered along securely, making the most of their fortune and getting the best out of life.

The caravan had proved worthy of the astounding *ménage* at Chantilly from which it came. Built to accommodate four sybarites, its comfort and capacity had to be seen to be believed. Its squire, a steam car, not only drew it along the roads, but found it in light and heat, filled its cistern from streams, cooled its larder and kept it free from dust. The van itself was complete to tea-napkins and a hot towel-rail.

The chauffeur detailed to play conductor knew his car inside out, and was a merry-eyed fellow to whom the country appealed. He was also susceptible to charm and, before their first day was over, had become Simon's very good servant and Mrs. Beaulieu's slave.

This was easy to understand.

Patricia was twenty-four and of great beauty. Tall, dark, slim, with the shape of a nymph and the style of a thoroughbred, she would have done Praxiteles infinite credit. There was about her a natural elegance which nothing could embarrass. Standing, walking, sleeping—always she looked her best. Her face, as was just, was full of character. She gave the impression of having herself in hand and so of some brave emotion which, if she had let it slip, would have come leaping. This was eagerness. Patricia was never bored. For her life was most manifestly a great adventure. She loved it openly. She was appreciative. The slightest thing would light the stars in her eyes and make the ready smile flash to her lips. This made her most attractive. A fine, fearless nature, proud yet generous, tender-hearted yet strong, brought her respect: and a little way she had of raising her straight eyebrows and tilting her exquisite chin would flick the word 'darling' on to the tip of your tongue.

The flat at Chartres had been let—let very well. But, sauntering South, by one

consent the Beaulieus had avoided the town. One day they would go back and tread the familiar streets, kneel in the shadowy splendour of their parish church, buy cigarettes from the shop in the *Rue du Grand Cerf*, visit the market and chatter to smiling Thérèse—one day, when Remembrance was cold. For better or worse that page in their life had been turned, and now—Mr. and Mrs. Beaulieu were on the open road.

Literally so, this tenth day of June.

Where a convenient lane bellied into the press of bracken through which it drove, by the side of a lispng brook, in the midst of a little close in the arms of a wood, Patricia looked down from a window and Simon looked up from a bank, with a pipe in his mouth.

"If," said the latter, "you feel you must be clean, now is the time to plunge. If Yves gets a lift both ways, he won't be back for at least two hours and a half."

"Then I shall do it," said Patricia. "It's a frightening prospect, of course. But that's your fault. If it was short, it would take about five minutes and I could do it every day."

"I'll dry it for you," said Simon apologetically.

Patricia shook her head.

"The sun'll do that," she said. "Better than any husband. Why did I swear to obey?"

"Instinctively," said Simon cheerfully. "The sight of me all virile in a perspiration and a gardenia——"

"I was *distracte*," bubbled Patricia. "You know it. One of my garters was misfiring, and I wasn't at all certain that I could get home on three. And now I'd better get down to it. If I want you I'll blow the whistle. You go and see the world."

She blew him a kiss, and Simon pulled his forelock. Then he rose and turned in the direction of the main highway.

This lay three hundred yards distant and, being in fine condition and as straight as a church's aisle, was somewhat naturally exploited by such cars as happened to pass that way. Prone on a convenient knoll, Simon could see them coming for a mile and a half each way, and it amused him to death to lie there and smoke and watch them making a mock of Time.

As he was approaching his observatory, the snarl of a powerful engine came to his ears. Simon quickened his steps. . . .

The car was all out, doing ninety or

thereabouts, travelling North. Its approach was much like that of a car on the screen. It flashed rather than sped into the foreground. The snarl swept into a roar. . . .

Then, thirty paces away, a tire burst.

The car swung to the right, but the driver straightened her up and, after a rugged passage, brought her to rest perhaps a furlong away. The next instant, to Simon's surprise, he was backing like one possessed.

With gears storming, the car, a grey two-seater, flung backwards up the road as far as the turning which led to the caravan. There it stopped dead. Then the gears crashed, and it lifted out of the highway and into the little lane.

Mildly astonished, partly of curiosity and partly because Patricia was not on view, Simon left his post and began to retrace his steps, but before he had taken six paces he heard the engine stop.

Simon bore to the right, walking delicately.

The driver, no doubt, was proposing to change his wheel. But that operation can be done on a *route nationale*. And why was he so frantic to leave the course? It looked as if he wanted to work undisturbed . . . as if he had reason to think—

Here Simon surmounted a hummock to see the car in the lane ten paces away. And between the car and the high-road lay a little bend. . . .

If further proof were needed of a desire to escape attention, that was supplied by the demeanour of the driver herself.

Sitting still as death in her seat, head up and slightly to one side, she was listening intently.

Instinctively Simon began to listen too.

Only the busy hum of insects, the twitter of birds, the scuttle of running water, troubled the silence.

So for perhaps thirty seconds. Then the faintest mutter stole into earshot. . . .

The mutter slid into a drone, the drone into a snarl.

Another car was coming, travelling North.

The storm swept up to and over the crest of uproar and began to sink to a snarl. As the snarl fell to a drone, the girl put up her hands and stretched luxuriously. Then she unfastened her leather flying-cap and, taking this off, shook her magnificent hair more or less into place.

She was remarkably pretty. Her features were fine, and her colouring was superb, an unusually white skin enhancing that ex-

quisite flush which only belongs to those who have auburn hair. Her nose was small and straight, and her eyes grey and fearless, while the curve of her mouth alone would have redeemed the meanest countenance.

After a moment's reflection Simon withdrew as he had come. Then he turned to the right and, walking rapidly, very soon entered the lane beyond the second bend. There he paused for a moment to relight his pipe. Then he put his hands in his pockets and sauntered towards the main road.

As he rounded the bend, with a flash of silk stockings the girl slid out of the car and, turning her back towards him, stooped to the tool-box. A moment later she must have heard his step, for she stood up and looked round sharply with a jack in her hand.

Simon continued to approach, and after a swift scrutiny she turned again to the car.

As he came alongside, she nodded and smiled.

"Good morning."

"Good morning," said Simon quietly and took off his hat. "If you'll sit down on the bank, I'll change the wheel."

The girl hesitated.

"I didn't accost you for that," she said. "I didn't really."

Simon laughed.

"I'm sure you didn't," he said. "They don't do it that way. Have you come far?" he continued, taking the jack.

"From Bordeaux," said the girl simply.

Simon stared.

From Bordeaux to where they stood was two hundred and thirty miles. And it was ten o'clock.

"Not to-day?"

"Yes, I have. I'm going to Paris. I wanted to get there quick, but I don't care now. How many miles have you come?"

"About a furlong," said Simon. "We live just up the road."

Eulalie raised her eyebrows.

Then she looked up and around.

"It's very peaceful here," she said wistfully.

Simon picked up a spanner and got to work.

Eulalie watched him thoughtfully.

When the change had been made—

"Thanks very much," she said. "I'm very grateful. And now just tell me one thing. What made you come and help? You knew I was here, of course." She jerked her head at the hummock where Simon had stood. "I saw you over there. Was it out of curiosity? Or because I'm rather good-



looking? Or why? I mean, your, er, entrance was studied, wasn't it?"

Beneath the keen grey gaze Simon grew slowly red.

"I saw your tire go," he said. "Then for no obvious reason you seemed extremely anxious to take this lane. Well, I naturally thought you were a man, and my wife's up there alone. As a matter of fact, she's washing her pretty brown hair. So if, for instance, you'd wanted to ask the way——"

"That's right," said the girl. "Go on."

"Then your engine stopped, and I came to see why."

"And found out," said Eulalie. "Yes?"

Simon picked up a rubber and wiped his hands.

"The rest," he said calmly, "was due to benevolence. That you're so pretty is my good fortune—that's all. Unless you'd been truly poisonous I should have done the same."

Eulalie pointed to the hummock.

"Why didn't you speak from there?"

"For your sake, of course," said Simon. "Nobody likes being caught doing eccentric things." He tossed the cloth into the box and shut the lid. Then he raised his hat. "Good-bye," he said and turned.

"Stop," said the girl quickly. "I didn't mean to be rude. Only . . ."

"Only what?" said Simon over his shoulder.

"To be frank, I was puzzled. You look so very honest, but—well, I've been watched before." And with that she laughed rather bitterly.

Simon turned back at once.

"Won't you come and see our home? The car will be all right here. And you must have raised a thirst between here and Bordeaux."

Eulalie shook her head.

"No, thanks. I'm going to lie down here and go to sleep."

"Patricia won't hear of that," said Simon, smiling. "When she knows——"

"Don't tell her."

Simon stared.

"Why on earth not?" he said.

"Because I don't want her to know."

Simon took out tobacco and started to fill his pipe.

"I'm sorry," he said, "to have to refuse your request."

Eulalie inspired audibly.

"Why are men such fools?" she breathed.

"Must I tell you right out that I don't want to meet your wife?"

"She's much nicer than me," said Simon.

"That I can well believe," flashed Eulalie. "Must I put it more plainly still?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not fit to meet her, you fool."

For a long moment the two looked each other in the eyes.

Then—

"That," said Simon quietly, "I refuse to credit."

Patricia's voice came floating.

"Si-mon."

"Here I am," shouted Simon.

"Where?"

"In the lane."

Eulalie turned on her heel and sat down by the side of the road.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eulalie looked at her wrist-watch and rose to her feet.

"Half-past three," she said, "and about a hundred and twenty miles to go. It's time I was moving."

"Not yet," said Patricia. "Besides, you must have some tea."

The girl shook her head.

"I don't want any tea," she said.

"Thanks very much. Besides, you've been kind enough. It's—it's the happiest day I've spent for years and years." She let her eyes wander round, as though to make sure of remembering everything. "I wonder whether you two know how lucky you are."

"We're very content," said Patricia.

Eulalie laughed.

"Content? So should I be. Look at my life. Always floating about from pillar to post. Hotel after hotel after hotel. Loathed by other women, often pestered by men. No friends, no peace, no prospects."

"We haven't any friends," said Patricia. "Or prospects."

"What about Etohechuria? I'd almost sell my soul for a prospect like that—at least, if I'd one to sell. As for friends—well, you've got each other, haven't you? From what I've seen, I should think that was good enough."

"Well, you've got us," said Patricia, "for what we're worth."

"That's right," said Simon.

For a moment it seemed that the girl must burst into tears. Then she sat down in her deck-chair and took out a cigarette.

"I—I haven't got you," she said uncertainly. "In a minute I'll tell you why. But give me this credit before you show me out." She turned to Simon. "I let you



change my wheel, but I didn't try to make friends."

"You did not," said Simon heartily.

"And I told you I wasn't fit to meet your wife."

"You certainly used those words."

"That," said Patricia gravely, "was a contradiction in terms."

Eulalie raised her eyebrows.

Then—

"You've been very kind to-day," she said, "to a common or garden thief. I've stuff worth fifty thousand on me now. Pounds, not francs." She rose to her feet. "Good-bye. Don't trouble to see me back. I can find my way."

"One moment," said Mrs. Beaulieu. "You say it's a rotten life. Why don't you turn it down?"

"How can I? I've got to live. And I've never done anything else. I never had any parents—I don't even know my name. For all I know, I was kidnapped when I was a child. I often think I was. But that's by the way. And I'll tell you another reason why I can't turn it down. I'm not on my own, you know; and our crowd doesn't believe in reformation. You've got to 'go on or go under'—because you know too much."

"Turn it down here and now," said Patricia steadily. "Now's your chance. You say you envy our lot. Well, make it yours. We've no money, and this caravan isn't ours, but there's plenty of room for three, and if we find Etchechuria I shouldn't imagine your crowd would worry you there."

Eulalie stared and stared.

At length—

"You must be out of your mind," she said shortly. "D'you realise you're suggesting that you should travel a thief?"

Patricia shook her head.

"I'm not like your crowd," she said. "I rather believe in reformation."

Eulalie turned to Simon.

"Do you hear what she says?"

"She speaks for me," said Simon.

The girl took a deep breath.

"It's Quixotically handsome of both of you. And amazingly attractive. But I couldn't dream of letting you—"

"That," said Simon quietly, "is our affair. We'd be happy to have you if you'd care to come."

"Care?" Eulalie let out a laugh. "You offer me heaven and ask if I'd care to leave hell."

"Then come," said Patricia.

"And bring with me battle and murder

and sudden death. You would thank me to-morrow, or as soon as they'd picked up my tracks. There'd be three lots after me then, instead of two. The police were sitting up when I left Toulouse—they didn't know me, but they'd been to look at the car. The gents I fooled this morning were rival crooks. Our crowd got in before them, and they're out for blood. A man called Auntie Emma was there himself—in that car you heard go by. He's exactly like the curates you see on the stage, with a village-idiot stare and a falsetto laugh. And a brain like Napoleon, an' just about as tough. They got at my chauffeur—I was afraid they might. I never liked the fellow, but my own was taken last year. Well, that's two followers. But if I were to disappear, my gang would begin to think. You see, I don't do the actual stealing. I only pass the goods. But they don't trust anyone an inch. They don't even trust themselves—and quite right, too. And if I was four hours late they'd come to look. Besides, I shouldn't like them to think I'd let them down. The stuff means nothing to me and never has. They pay my expenses and give me what money I want. But I don't spend much on myself, and I've never pinched so much as a cracked seed-pearl. Thieves' honour, you know. They call me 'The Bank of England,' and, to be perfectly truthful, I'm rather proud of the name. Hullo. Who's this?"

A short, thick-set figure in blue had emerged from the belt of woodland and was approaching.

"That," said Patricia, "is Yves, our chauffeur."

Eulalie frowned.

"I ought to have gone before," she said, as though addressing herself. "Never mind."

"What shall I do?" said Simon, suddenly conscious that the girl was no ordinary guest.

"Nothing. It doesn't matter. He doesn't know what you do. But I wasn't thinking of myself."

Instinctively she turned and began to stroll down the lane with Patricia by her side.

Simon advanced to meet Yves.

"Can't we persuade you?" said Patricia. "Go through with this job if you must; but then chuck in your hand and come with us."

"No," said the other. "No. It can't be done. I'm not going to foul your nest. To-morrow when I've disappeared you'll see that I'm right. My case squeals for salvation, and your impulse is to save. But it

can't be done. I'm very fond of animals, and whenever I see some poor dog, wretched and thin as a rail, my impulse is to adopt it and make it well. But unless you've a proper Dogs' Home you can't do that sort of thing. I've tried and I know."

"The case is quite different," said Patricia. "There's no charity here. You would be independent. Simon and I are pilgrims, and you'd make a third. If——"

Simon's voice interrupted.

"Keep on walking," he said, "but listen to me." He drew abreast of them. "Yves is just back from Vendôme. There's a chain across the road there and they're stopping all cars." Eulalie started, and Patricia caught her breath. "It's the same at Tours and Chartres and every town."

There was a deathly silence. Patricia felt rather sick.

Then—

"How does he know?" said Eulalie.

"From people coming through."

Eulalie stared at the sky. "This is Toulouse," she said. "I wonder—— Never mind. Have you got a map?"

"Not of this part."

"Well, I must clear out from here—quick. Can your chauffeur see us still?"

"As far as the bend."

"Right. The trouble is how to make Paris. I'm hopeless at finding my way, and every time you ask you blaze your trail. I've always had a chauffeur. I can manage the main road, but——"

"Can you get to a station?" said Patricia shakily.

"Trains aren't healthy," said the girl. "If you want to get out, you can't, and a station's half a gaol. As for a terminus. . ."

"You must lose the car and lie low," said Simon sharply.

"You can't lie low in the country."

"You could in a caravan."

Eulalie laughed.

"You're very sporting," she said. "And but for the stuff I'm wearing I might accept. As it is, I can't—it wouldn't be neighbourly. Besides, the sooner I pass it, the better for me."

"I wish you'd chuck it away," said Patricia wildly.

"And lose my name," said the girl, "the only thing I've got. No, thanks, my dear. And that's why I must get through. It's got to be in by midnight, and somehow or other——"

"But you *can't*," cried Simon. "You haven't an earthly. Think. The main road's

barred, you've no map, you daren't ask, you're bad at finding your way, Paris is——"

"Needs must," said Eulalie shortly, as they rounded the bend.

Then she glanced over her shoulder. The next moment she was running like a hare.

The two pelted after her. . . .

The car stood as they had left it, and the girl, with Simon beside her, was almost there when she trod on the lip of a rut and went flying.

The man gave her his hands and lifted her up.

"Hurt?" he asked.

"Yes—no. Nothing. A rut. I turned my foot." She limped to the car and clung to the door piteously. "I'll be all right in a moment," she added between her teeth.

Her forehead went down to her hands. She was plainly in agony.

"Oh, my dear," cried Patricia, panting.

The girl, dead-white in the face, lifted her head boldly and tried to smile. Then she drooped, swayed, put a hand to her temples and fainted.

Simon caught her and carried her to the bank by the side of the road.

"She's done," he said to Patricia. "Look at that foot." The slight left ankle was visibly bigger than the right. He slid the foot from its slipper. "I'll get some water. Can you get her stocking down?"

When he returned with a dripping handkerchief, Eulalie was sitting up, regarding a small bare foot, which, already considerably swollen, was turning purple.

"Strap me up," she said, "and put me into the car."

"Not on your life," said Simon, applying the rag. "And now listen to me. You're beat. You're out of the running. You've lost your horse. *If you'll chuck the business to-night and come with us, I'll deliver the goods.* I know the roads—we used them a week ago. And when I'm near enough I can take the train. I may be robbing Peter, but I've a whim to pay Paul. And so I'll do it."

"My word, you're white," said the girl. She turned to Patricia. "Aren't you proud of him?"

"Yes."

Her eyes returned to Simon.

"Supposing you're stopped."

"I shan't be—the way I go. There aren't any police. And you'd better let me. I mean, we can't very well abandon you now, can we? And as long as you've got your parcel you'll be rather a ticklish guest."

Eulalie touched Patricia upon the arm.

"D'you want him to go?"

"Yes."

The girl glanced up and down the lane. Then she twitched her skirt to her knee. Under her right hock, held in place by four straps, was a wallet the length of a cheque-book six inches wide. She had it loose in a second. . . .

Simon slid it into his pocket.

"Where?" he said.

"Montmartre—*The Red Nose*. That's a *café*. When you leave your coat at the cloak-room—there's a coat in the car—leave that wallet in the pocket and ask the attendant the time. When he tells you, ask him the date. Then go inside. You'll see an old fellow there with a smile and a glass in his eye. English. Sit down beside him and talk. Presently take out your case and ask him to smoke. You must have only two cigarettes—don't forget. One at each end of the slide. If he says 'Quality, I see. Not quantity,' that's your man. Then you say 'I've got a case at home which holds fifteen' or 'ten' or 'sixty'—whatever the number of your cloak-room ticket may be. And let him go before you do. That's all. If you like to add that you've heard that the Bank of England is going to be closed for repairs, you can. You've no money on you, of course. There's my bag on the step. Take all there is. There's about five thousand francs. And take my case as well."

Simon did her bidding and then slipped into the car.

Patricia stepped on to the running-board.

"I'm coming with you," she said, "to the end of the lane."

As the car pulled backwards—

"Tell Yves I've gone for a doctor. I'll be back at noon to-morrow, and then I can spin some yarn. Pretend to get anxious, you know, when I don't roll up."

"That'll be easy, Simon." She hesitated.

"Why are we doing this?"

"I'm hanged if I know."

"I'll tell you," said Patricia. "*Noblesse oblige*."

The high road was very close now, so Simon applied the brake and held out the clutch.

"My lady," he said. "My darling," and put up his mouth.

Patricia kissed him. Then she put her arms round his neck and held his head to her breast. . . .

As she stepped down—

"I'll see if the road's clear," she said quietly.

A moment later she waved, and the car slid back and then round till it was facing North.

"So long, my darling."

Patricia did not speak, but she smiled very gently and put up a little hand. . . .

The next moment he was gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Master, whom nothing could perturb, was ill at ease.

*The Red Nose* was hardly exclusive: no one had ever been known to be turned away: all sorts and conditions of men and women, in all sorts and conditions of dress and mind and body, could use or abuse its shelter, its rubbed plush seats and its band, provided they ordered a reasonable quantity of liquor and paid on delivery.

All this went to make the *café* an excellent rendezvous. Indeed, could The Master have been prevailed upon to compile a list of 'reception rooms' for the guidance of those about to 'receive,' there is little doubt that *The Red Nose* would have been accorded the dignity of two stars.

To-night, however, its peculiar virtue had been abominably violated.

That two tables away should be sitting an English gentleman who had personally paid The Master ten thousand pounds to save a lady's name some ten months before did not particularly please him. He had treated the gentleman, who was little more than half his age, as an equal: and the gentleman, who had no sense of decency, had rewarded his condescension by treating him like dirt. The memory of such an occasion was enough to make anyone frown.

But that was nothing.

*Upon the opposite side of the room sat Auntie Emma. . . .*

This in itself was nothing either. The two had often sat vis-à-vis before. *What made it so very inconvenient was that The Bank of England was due . . . that The Bank of England was coming whether he stayed or not.*

The Master hated unpleasantness.

If he waited for The Bank of England, unpleasantness would follow of a very unpleasant sort. If he did not wait for The Bank of England, then Auntie Emma would. And The Bank of England was worth just fifty thousand pounds.

The Master, whose supernatural ability to choose the right evil more swiftly than any man alive had kept him at the head of his profession for fifteen years, found himself wondering what to do.

The band began to render *Chili Bom Bom*. . . .

Suddenly the Englishman rose, crossed to The Master's table and sat down with his back to the room.

"Good evening," he said stiffly. "We meet again."

Instinctively The Master cleared for action and felt the better for the change.

All his good temper returned.

"How nice," he said smoothly, "of you to remember me."

"It is," said the other curtly, producing his case. "Have a cigarette?"

The Master stared at the case as though it were unreal.

Then he removed his eye-glass, wiped this and put it back.

There was no doubt about it. The case contained two cigarettes, one at each end of the slide.

For a moment his great brain lurched between amazement and hope.

Then he put his head on one side.

"Ah," he said slowly. "Quality, I see. Not Quantity."

Then he took one of the two and held his breath.

"I've got a case at home," said Simon casually. . . .

The Master let his breath go and closed his eyes.

His smile became positively seraphic.

"How beautiful upon the mountains. . . ."

"Yes?" he murmured.

"A case that'll hold"—Simon hesitated. Then—"quite a lot," he added.

The other's eyelids flickered.

"Have you, now?" he purred. "What a very curious thing. And you of all people. . . . How many does it hold?"

Simon took and lighted his last cigarette.

"The Bank of England," he said, "is closed for repairs."

The Master sat very still. This was not according to plan. Moreover, he detested evasion.

The beauty of Simon's feet became less striking.

When he spoke again his tone was velvety.

"So," he said, "I surmised. How many—"

"She will never re-open," said Simon. "I hope no pressure will ever be put upon her to change her mind."

The Master, in whose eyes evasion when compared with presumption became a virtue, decided to apply the lash.

He raised his eyebrows.

"May I suggest—"

"No. You may listen to what I have to say and then you may take your choice."

In a silence quick with an emotion which sends the blood to the head, The Master smiled very tenderly upon his finger-tips and, conscious that a tinge of colour had stolen into his cheeks, thought with great acerbity upon the line which he would have taken if only Auntie Emma had not been there.

Simon was speaking.

"This isn't exactly a writing-room, but, as you undoubtedly noticed, I managed to write a letter during the last half-hour. Just look it through, will you?"

He tossed an envelope across.

This was stamped and addressed.

*Simon Beaulieu, Esq.,  
c/o The Westminster Bank,  
St. James's Street,  
London, S.W.*

*To Await Collection.*

The Master hesitated. Then he drew out its sheet.

*12, Clock Lane,  
Crutched Friars.  
June 12th, 1925.*

*RECEIVED at The Red Nose, Montmartre, of Simon Beaulieu, Esq., stolen property to the approximate value of fifty thousand pounds.*

"Once it is posted," said Simon slowly, "that letter will lie unopened—until *The Bank of England is approached again*." He inhaled luxuriously. "A very good way of signing is with the finger-tips. If, for example, the top of a table is damp and you've got a cigarette, you just drop the ash. . . ."

"Quite," said The Master gently. "Quite. And if one doesn't fancy that way, or indeed any way, I suppose you will be unable to recollect how many cigarettes your case at home holds. My child, go home and play with girls of your own size."

"And outlook," said Simon. "I will in a minute. But you've got the bit about my memory wrong. If one doesn't fancy signing, I'm going to cross the floor. I think perhaps Auntie Emma would like to know . . . how many cigarettes . . . my case at home holds. . . ."

The Master sat as though frozen. He did not appear to breathe. Only his eyes showed any life at all: and these roved to and fro like caged beasts seeking a way out and finding none.

At last—

"Supposing," he drawled, "supposing . . . one signed."

"Then," said Simon cheerfully, "I shall call that little boy there and send him to post the letter."

"And then?"

"When he comes back and says he has posted it—if I believe him I shall give him two francs."

The Master moistened his lips.

"And then?"

"Then I shall tell you how many cigarettes my case at home holds. And now look sharp and choose. I want to get to bed."

The Master lifted his head and looked about him.

From a corner the furious rout of Rhythm stumbled and swung and crashed: upon the diminutive floor a shifting mass of couples passed through the stages of agglomeration and disintegration apparently oblivious of time and space: the broad girdle of tables was fully occupied. An uproarious party in fancy dress elbowed three students absorbed in a discussion of art: with tears running down their cheeks, two English undergraduates applauded the efforts of a third to serve Terpsichore: hoist upon the shoulders of two American squires, who were singing the words of the tune, a girl in a pierrot's dress was belabouring with a bladder such dancers as she could reach, and laughingly disregarding the fire of red and white pellets which sang through and into her curls: over the receipt of custom was presiding a fair-haired siren of outrageous proportions and uncertain age who appeared to have been poured into a dress several sizes too small and then set up like an image upon heels several sizes too high: leaning comfortably against the opposite wall, Auntie Emma was smoking a fat cigar and laughing at the heated argument which two ladies were conducting across his chest. . . .

"Why," said The Master, moistening some cigarette ash, "why should I trust you?"

Simon did not deign to reply.

At length—

"I asked a question," said The Master blandly. "Perhaps the band—"

"I heard you," said Simon. "If you repeat it I shall cross the floor."

For the first and last time The Master looked him full in the eyes.

Then—

"Well, well," he said gently. "Well, well. To-day to you. To-morrow. . . ."

He drummed with his fingers upon the table, then laid their tips squarely upon the sheet.

\* \* \* \* \*

"And there you are," said Simon, some twelve hours later. "My recognising Auntie Emma was a streak of pure good luck. The moment I saw him I knew if I played my cards right I had The Master cold."

With a foot on a second deck-chair, Eulalie stared at the woodland with half-closed eyes.

"What beats me by lengths," she said, "is his letting you tie him up. He's supposed to be able to bluff an automatic."

"I think," said Simon, "it was a question of pride. It was hellish to lose to me—even more hellish than to lose to Auntie Emma: but for Auntie Emma to know that I had put it across him was just a shade too thick."

Eulalie lifted her head to look at the clear blue sky.

"I can't get over it," she murmured. "It's too much like a dream. The impression that I'm bound to wake up is overwhelming. Yesterday, right up against it: to-day, a place in the sun and a share in a fairy-tale. What have you done it for?"

Patricia looked at Simon and smiled.

"I really don't know," she said. "It seemed such a pity not to—that's all I can say."

Eulalie turned to Simon.

"Yesterday afternoon you said you'd a whim to pay Paul. Well, you've indulged your whim. God knows what it might have cost you, but you didn't appear to bother to take that into account. Any way, you've paid him—or paid his debts. He's worth rather less than a hair of your darling's head, but you've paid them. He—he can't pay you back, you know, but—he—won't—forget."

"If you must thank someone," said Simon, "poor Peter's the man. He put up the wherewithal."

"He's safe in the arms of Lloyd's—don't weep for him. I say you paid, and you did. Well, there's my debt to you. As for Patricia, I'm even deeper in. Feet—miles deeper. If I saved her life ten times it wouldn't do any good." She whipped her foot from the chair and stood upright. "He won't understand that," she said with a dazzling smile. "And yet he ought to know. Will you put him wise? I'm going to look for violets. It sounds elementary, but I've never had time before."

She limped into the bracken and presently out of sight.

"What did she mean?" said Simon.

Patricia came to his side, fell on her knees and laid her cheek again his.

"This," she said. "Women don't like lending men. However many they've got and however cheap they are, they don't like lending them. But I lent her . . . you."

*The second episode in this series will appear in the next number.*



## LANDSCAPES IN ENGLAND.

**G**IVE me the purple footprints of the heather  
That runs down brown cliffs to salute the sea;  
Of all the gracious coast-lines of my England,  
This is the shore where I would choose to be.

Give me the blue incoming of the billows,  
Shedding their blueness as they break on land;  
Give me the haunted caverns that still echo  
With clink and clatter of the smuggler band.

Give me the tawny tangle of the bracken,  
Reaching aflame towards the lowering sun,  
This, of all fires that burn in autumn England,  
Assuages heart's grief for a summer done.

Give me a russet sail on sparkling waters,  
Crossing the slant of moonbeams on the sea;  
A gull's wing, tireless, that my thoughts may follow  
The track that marks my England's sovereignty!

Give me a road between bird-haunted hedges;  
When it grows steep, to climb it bravely still;  
It ends in love, whose other name is welcome,  
Ruling an English cottage on a hill.

Give me a garden, as of old in England,  
To stand waist-high amid my own flowers' foam;  
To see my firelight dance on oaken rafters;  
Change England, if you will, but leave her Home!

ETHEL M. HEWITT.

# PATRIOTISM

By THE RIGHT HON.  
THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, P.C.

THAT every sentient being must live for something outside the individual self is a wholesome proposition not likely to be disputed even by the most paradoxical reasoner who may capture the fancy of the passing hour. At the same time there are many legitimate divergencies of opinion concerning the duty which man or woman should accord to the family, the hamlet, the country, or the race, perhaps to mankind at large. There are differences here, indeed, which I should like to reconcile. For it would rejoice me, in contemplating those difficult tasks of statesmanship which yet lie ahead, to give a new direction, possibly a new meaning, to the ideal of patriotism. This ideal has been a fact of history. And more than that. It has been an important factor in international development—one which we have to consider with care in facing the immediate future.

## A CHALLENGE.

Not long ago, in the pages of this widely-circulated magazine, I referred to patriotic feelings as though they should possess, in essence, something of the passionate. If this be conceded, there follows a challenge to the anti-patriotic which cannot fail of force. In a word, if anybody denies patriotism to be a virtue, a necessity, and a power—well, all I can say is, there will soon be “wigs on the green.”

Patriotism is not a quality or a qualification, a theory or a thing, easily to be understood or to be taken absolutely for granted. A charming and rhythmical aphorism of Sir Walter Scott's lingers universally on the ear. All will agree that those must be devoid of soul who have no love for their native land. Many poets might be quoted to the same effect. Leaders have died with this very thought on their lips. This does not mean that we can forget current warnings, nor yet the past. For ourselves, owing allegiance to a land great in tradition, in history, in natural and varied beauty, pride touches passion as soon as the unparalleled expansion of our political

strength and influence is taken into account. For us, patriotism has overflowed the banks of rivers.

## LANGUAGE AND LIFE.

Such is our country. The local has already swelled into the imperial. There has been something more than natural growth. The man who is conscious of it might easily be persuaded that he had succeeded to that poetic inheritance which in olden times made one nomad people to be, of all in the known world, the divinely chosen race.

We ourselves are not nomads. We are varied and commingled, and very widely we wander; but, as a people, we have settled down. The dominions over which our sympathy, with authority, is farthest flung look back to their original home, satisfied that it is the most stable thing in a changing universe, and much more than satisfied in affection and allegiance.

But in all this absorption the knowledge persists that stability is not the only thing that makes for patriotism. Patriotism of the highest kind is for those, above all others, who possess language, and with this, it may be, the consciousness of race. Local habitation is not necessary. Language alone gives very much more than a name. What more poignant passage is recorded in the sacred literature which we ourselves have adopted than the song of those exiles by the waters of Babylon who wept when they remembered Zion? But we, fortunate in cherishing a patriotism which does not need to weep, would be less than grateful if we showed ourselves oblivious of the springs which still give us internal and external strength. And still we continue to rise, as a people, higher than these sources. We have to prove ourselves mightier yet.

## PATRIOTISM IN EVOLUTION.

Now, were we to dwell too fervently on the past, on its glories or its sorrows, we should run the risk of losing all our common-sense in sensibility, in sentimentousness. If

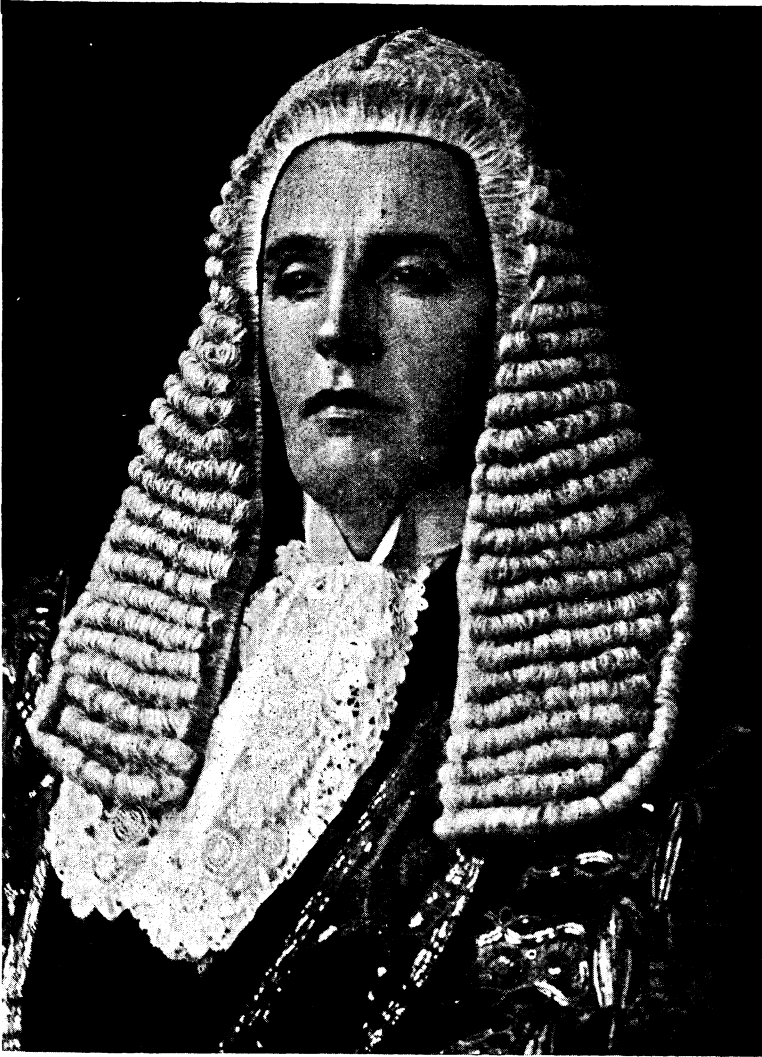


Photo by]

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, P.C.

[Russell

an express unity of character. Human nature does not change. Give anything a fair start and you can imagine the rest. Every river must reach the sea. But the spring and the stream and the ocean are of varying magnitudes. So it is with all the tributaries which together constitute patriotism. There is an instructive parallel, perhaps, in literature, once we regard literature as art and science combined, and perceive the significance of the combination.

#### A LITERARY PARABLE.

An academic contemporary of my own, one who has developed into a real pundit, once read a paper before a critical but inchoate assembly. He discoursed, not unwisely, on the beginnings of literature. I remember how he remarked, in the

attitude of one who had made a discovery, that the lamp over the portals of his own obscure lodging bore a number. This, said he, was for him "the beginning of literature."

How many things that solitary number postulated and suggested! There was the man who made the lamp, and the man who had spun the glass, and the art of writing, and the power of calculation, and the idea of an entrance used by beings who would also find an exit—all this was involved. From which a clever mind could deduce almost anything, from birth to death, from the cradle to the grave. Imagination

patriotism of any kind is worth having, it will be well to have more of it. But one can have too much of a good thing. I find it necessary, indeed, to draw a definite line at this point. It is not only that there are different kinds of patriotism. There are different degrees. Patriotism may be true or false. After all, many a thief masquerades as a specially honest man. Once more we have to draw a line. We have to draw many lines.

There is the line, for example, which separates the near from the distant. But when we come to examine the boundaries, we realise that there runs through all time



being once invoked, the record—that is, literature—was concurrently secured. The *cacoethes scribendi* came into action, I think, long before lamps, but still this parable I will now relate to my subject of patriotism, tracing that beyond its origins likewise, for the evolution of patriotism is not unlike the evolution of literature itself.

#### A HALT ON THE ROAD.

The cavemen—people who are so often used in parables—must positively have instructed themselves in the rudiments of patriotism as soon as they realised that a fissure, a rock, or a stream might not only make natural barriers, but actually coincide with differences of opinion; and divisions of opinion did spring to life as soon as ever there was a meeting with other barbarians. Happily for the human race, the resulting confusion came to be adjusted, often enough, as soon as the first shock of the meeting was over.

But we still retain the primitive feeling that a preliminary crash is by no means the worst preparation for the ultimate shaking of hands. That is the lighter way of putting it. For hence comes war and all the terrific panoply of armament. Any plea based on the need of patriotism here—a thing that must not be neglected, because wars righteous and unrighteous are equally fought under the ægis—calls for the use of heavier guns.

It is all very well to think and talk of that final handshaking, but the intervals are filled with tremors of earth and sky, and humanity is writhing in anticipation as I write. This means, very likely, that we have not as yet got very far on the road which the cavemen trod. But all experience was in their experiments, just as all literature was in the number on the lamp.

#### SOME EXPANSIONS.

I make a gift of the admission made to those who will read into it a charge against patriotism itself. For truly, looking candidly at internecine feuds, those who blame an exaggerated patriotism may have some critical sense within them. There are occasions when the critic may justly vote for an enlargement of that famous dictum of Dr. Johnson: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

These considerations are, in truth, on the larger side already. But patriotism has an inner side, an intimate side, a natural and a very homely appeal. It is because of this,

high politics apart, that everybody can understand it, because of this that of late its claim, its necessity, and its power have increased among us.

I revert for a moment to more primitive types and to their gradual evolution. In the very simplest societies the desire to accentuate worthy rivalries between tribe and tribe produced by degrees emergence of individuality and also of the civic sense. The more civilised a race became, the more a feeling for home was developed. But civilisation cannot live on itself, any more than literature can.

#### SOME LIMITATIONS.

Millions of the best people have been content to live for home and not to live outside it. But gregariousness has not been starved in consequence. School, college, guild—the development is continuous. Either might provide enough patriotism for any individual soul to account for a cosmos. Perhaps civilisation would be more real—certainly mankind would be a good deal happier—if we could stop at this. Only we cannot.

Patriotism cannot be stagnant. It must respond to the laws of growth. The groups of which I have spoken will scatter seeds. Patriotism has been defined as "a consciousness of nationality together with the will to realise such nationality further." That is pretty good for a scientific definition. The theme is abstract. And I did not put this attempt forward for the sake of knocking it down. The positive idea which is implied is suggestive enough.

But, to be more precise, patriotism is in truth a sense of duty to one's own people and one's own time which will not limit itself to the life in being, but will sacrifice all that life can give to this duty. In the definition I have cited I find there is more excluded than there is admitted. I find in it small sign of duty, none of sacrifice. Scientific definitions are rather like flowers frozen in a block of ice. You break the ice and set the flowers free, and then they die. I want something less liable to perish in the free air of thought and conviction. Most of us accepted in youth the old moral *Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori*.

The words, of course, familiar as they are, may be carped at. Is it always sweet, is it noble always to die for one's country? Is it the most fitting of all deaths? Not so; we cannot accept the unvarying validity of such a decree. Nevertheless, there have been

Roman deaths, in the fuller sense, in all the years since Rome was a power, which make such words infallibly just.

And the consensus of reasonable opinion takes this kind of sacrifice and all it involves as inseparable from the idea of patriotism. But there is a point at which some of our young men of to-day will have none of this. In their caustic discommendation something lies which the old notion of patriotism must nerve itself to meet.

#### THE TIDE RISES.

I think it all comes back to the thought of sacrifice enlarged, all the more because this is a matter concerned not nearly so much with death as it is with life. Our country needs us for the doing of things which carry with them no particular honour or joy. There are many common duties inseparable from the community's requirements. Some of them are highly irksome, but there may be pleasure, too. We may take the smooth with the rough.

One juror may smile, another may make a wry face, when, for his endurance of tedium for a week, due to the enemies of society, one of His Majesty's judges offers a personally-conducted tour over one of His Majesty's prisons by way of recompense for his trouble. It is the smiler who gets the best of it. The grimacer can be bowed out of court without ceremony.

I take this trivial instance of sacrifice for duty as a form of patriotism liable to be indulged in by anybody, not oblivious of the fact that many thousands of acts performed daily in our land possess the same humour-some virtue. But I think our collective virtue, of a more serious kind, greatly transcends this. Our sacrifices within living memory, and for really great causes, have been on the rising scale. Our own proverbs are above the proverbial now. They strike a pæan such as might have been struck in Athens long ago.

#### MEN AND MOVEMENTS.

And there has been an increase in all the spheres of interest involved. To the rank and file the chance of performing a patriotic service may come but once in a lifetime. To others the service itself may be almost naturally lifelong. There is a vast amount of unrecognised service afloat. Committees that care for the blind at home are but shadows of those greater councils which open the eyes of the world to our magnified

mission wherever the sun of our influence is shining.

Here is the enlarged patriotism which must strike every imagination and warm every heart. That acute observer Dean Inge, on his return from America, charges us to remember that in yonder vast continent of States patriotism is taught in every school. Americans enter on life believing in a patriotic system, and this is the America which we lost—though we may have regained it—through an excessive devotion to the idea of nationality. It may be doubted, however, whether any formal organisation of our teaching would alter the invincibility of Britain, as it grows in the average mind through our temperament, our casual upbringing, or other form of natural growth. It would seem that with every setback to our pride we brace ourselves afresh.

But it is when we look over a widened field and see things undone or only partially progressing that we are most deeply concerned. Even here there are some favourable omens. The pageantry of existence is a fine medium of expansion in itself. The Earl of Meath saw that when he let his ideas of symbolism in action break upon the country and spread his thoughts about the faith of patriotic unity far and wide.

#### AN UNASSAILABLE CHARTER.

And the Dean inclines to Lord Meath. The Dean's belief, which I am happy to hold with him, was engrossed with an equally important plea. He was speaking up for schemes of settlement overseas. The congestion of our own country, the pressing need for the movement of men and families, cannot fail to attract every spirit that looks forward to better times. Endurance and sacrifice are not to be left unconsidered when these ideas are ventilated, and it was right to associate herewith an expression of faith in the British tribal creed which, ethically speaking, has come to embrace every nation on earth.

It is not least by those charters of freedom which now are held unassailable—or else, failing that, to be defended by us to the death—that the aid of the individual and of the community are found to be at one. Those charters are in themselves the proof of our extended patriotism. I do not forget, as I write these words, some drawbacks, some weaknesses. In the course of a long and varied experience of the world I have occasionally met specimens of that unwel-

come intruder who will praise "every century but this, every country but his own." I have been confronted, in the courts and elsewhere, with individuals and coteries not unversed in chicanery, but I think we are discovering daily fresh antidotes for the confusion of these poisoners of the wells of patriotism. And again I look far afield.

#### A GREAT EXAMPLE.

The patriotism of which I am thinking most has an outward show and it has an inner working. It chances that, appositely enough, there has recently appeared a very remarkable book. It exemplifies a complete concentration of what I have been saying here. It professes an unbounded belief in those beneficent activities which have been characteristic of our race; its pages teem with constructive ability, graceful writing, and all the manifestations of a fervent spirit ready to work and suffer. I am speaking, of course, of the late Lord Curzon's "British Government in India."

That a life is a bigger thing than a book, and that a man is greater than his work, might well prove a congenial theme on which to build some interesting hypotheses and for the enforcing of certain conclusions. But my readers will be ready to absorb the moral without effort. Once more the triumphs best worth preserving in the recollection of a race are individual triumphs. In all the vigorous life of the Marquess Curzon was a fine outward show together with a splendid inner working. And I commend that example to all.

#### A BOOK AND A MESSAGE.

I make here, of course, no declaration of Indian policy—nor will anyone think of such a thing as a political secret in connection with a subject which declares itself practically identical in all its aspects with the light of day—but I deem myself happy to have this effulgent example before me, as I conclude this message on the subject of my editor's choice. And so I keep Lord Curzon's book in mind.

Of the fascinating records which concern so many famous personalities, future generations will judge, but I imagine that these will give a new lease of life to many

memories. Indeed, everything we have here considered is represented in the services of men who for the most part were willing exiles. Duty and sacrifice are written on every page. We have analysed those two words with sufficiency. We see how, in one way and another, patriotism is concentrated within them, and, strange to relate, as a corrective to national diffuseness, concentration on patriotism is the greatest need of our people to-day.

But here, as a Curzon's contribution to his own fame, even as the book must prove a contribution to the fame of many others, so no feature is more important than an unveiling of personality. The writer shows the shrouded life in the highest place. He pictures again and again the difficulty, the isolation of the patriotic soul. He reveals the secrets of many, not hesitating to uncover his own. At the root of all this is patriotism—a man's love of his country.

#### A FINAL APPEAL.

Am I going beyond my commission if I urge that the lesson here given in the highest place is the lesson most urgently needed for our rank and file in the interests of individuality as well as of the highest patriotism? The mantle of the Secretary of State for India is assuredly broad enough to cover this appeal. And India, still requiring service, requires our men.

There are fears, justifiable fears, for those who are oppressed by circumstance, when venturesomeness in foreign fields is not eagerly accepted, and yet I do not think that we are deficient in breed, in many ways, as far as risks are concerned. Wide is the possible choice, even in these days, for the young.

I would urge every reader of these lines to take patriotism as some part of his necessary equipment for the rest of his life, whether the span be long or short in prospect. For those in youth there is fascination in change. For those who have seen and done, there is influence to be wielded. To those who think of an imperial liberty as their guide, the way is clear. True patriotism can still be employed at home, but it beckons from a far distance for the sake of the future generations.



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# CAVE DWELLERS

By BARBARA MALIM

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

THIS story begins with a picnic, and ends—but that is anticipating.

The picnic took place in India, way up in the immutable barren hills, and to get there the party had to ford a river—a river shallow and tame enough at the ford, yet, in spite of it, most of the men managed to get their feet wet, chivalrously helping the ladies over the stepping-stones.

Now, even in India, where picnics are an everyday occurrence, your clever hostess should always provide a reasonable excuse for giving her picnic. The famous N—caves provided the excuse for this one. So, after tea, the party set out, two and two, to begin the search.

Of course it went without saying that Dick and Monica should go off together—everyone knew that they had been friends for years—but though they scoured the neighbouring hills diligently, never the trace of a cave did they find.

At the end of an hour of fruitless hunting they attacked the highest hill they could see, and it was just when they were beginning the steepest bit that Dick Westrup suddenly stopped dead, barring the way. "For the third and last time, Monica," he said, "will you marry me?" His voice shook slightly as he stood rigid, waiting for his answer.

"For the third and last time, I will not!" Monica Dale-Moss, ex-M.P., shut her mouth with a vicious snap and strode past him up the hill. "Really, Dick, you disappoint me," she flung over her shoulder. "I've been working very hard for a long time now. When they threw me out, I decided to come here for a well-earned holiday. Do let me enjoy it in peace. I thought you'd got over all that sort of thing years ago."

"Ten years ago, I suppose you mean," he said grimly, following her. "Unfortunately, you err. Ten years ago you said you were too busy to bother with anything outside your career. Five years before that you were too busy, examining life and humanity,

to find time for love. I hoped you might have outgrown both these stages. Admit that I have given you ample time to change your opinions?"

"You are not very polite, Dick," she put in plaintively, "to call such pointed attention to my years. Ten and five and twenty make thirty-five. I flatter myself I don't look a day more than twenty-eight. It shows how much I really love you to allow you to say such things at all. But as you insist on my thirty-five summers, then you make me into an old maid and therefore past the marrying age."

But for once he would not respond to her effort to get back to their usual light-hearted good-fellowship, and for several minutes they scrambled up the rocks in silence. At last she turned to him, suddenly serious.

"Poor old Dick, I'm sorry. If I'd married anyone, it would have been you. You are the real stuff and the best comrade I have, when you cut out the sob-stuff. The trouble is that I belong to that vast army of the thousand unwanted women in England."

"Two misstatements," he interrupted quickly. "M.P.s are proverbially inaccurate. First, may I remind you that you are in India, not England, at present. Secondly, I happen to know, and so do you, of two other poor beggars beside myself who would give all they possess for a chance to marry you."

Monica shrugged her shoulders petulantly. "Don't be so tiresome, Dick. You know perfectly well what I mean. Perhaps I should have said 'unwanting' instead of 'unwanted.' You can't contend that there are not many more women than men. Nature is equalising things by creating a new kind of woman—a woman who has no wish to mate. Some women are born to be wives. I'm not, and I shouldn't make you happy if I married you. I am chiefly interested in the things which interest you, getting my teeth into life and shaking and worrying.

all the good out of it that I can. I'm not heartless. I love you as I hope to love many

my carpet slippers!" Dick's voice was scathing. "Really, Monica, there are times



"She watched eagerly."

men, and babies, and dogs, and books, and—oh, the world is full of things to love! I wish——"

"Then you really wish me to love you as I love my elderly maiden aunt and—er—

when I long to shake you!" he finished rather breathlessly, for the going was rough.

The hill they were ascending was bare,

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"Monica raised her arm, sighted steadily along the short barrel, and fired."

"You are afraid of something? What is it?" he asked quickly, and struggled to a sitting position. "Oh, my head!" he gasped the next second, and fell back against her an inert heap.

She fumbled hurriedly for matches.

There were only three left. For the moment fear of how she might find him ousted every other consideration. The yellow match-light flickered, showing Dick again unconscious. But the beating of his heart once more reassured her. He was cold,

however. By this time his clothes ought to be more or less dry, so she rose hastily and, by the light of another match, piled them upon him.

As she did so, she saw that a faint grey light showed at the entrance to the cave. Hope surged through her heart at sight of it. Dawn was breaking, and the worst of her vigil was over. Help would surely come with the daylight, she thought, gazing rapturously towards it. Even as she did so, a dark bulky form loomed up in the opening, sharply outlined against the sky.

Sheer terror descended on her again as she stooped and hurriedly began fumbling for the revolver. Once, long ago, she had learnt to use a sporting rifle, but a revolver—never. How many times would it fire without being reloaded? Ah, she had found it at last! Supposing she missed? A sudden mad rage filled her as she crouched beside the unconscious Dick. He was hers—hers! That great beast should never get him. She would fight to the last ounce.

The bear had not moved; it stood motionless, head up, sniffing.

Monica raised her arm, sighted steadily along the short barrel, and fired. Before the smoke had completely cleared away, she rose and crept forward. What had happened? Had she missed?

The opening was empty.

Forward again then till she could peer cautiously through.

Nothing!

Outside the little cove lay empty, but she thought that on the further side the

waters moved, as if stirred by some massive form. She had missed, then? Well, she was glad. The great intruder had done no harm, and perhaps he had a mate over there awaiting his return.

She was shaking violently from head to foot, and had now to lean against the rock for support, gratefully drawing in deep breaths of the cold morning air.

A thin line of dull yellow was already creeping across the sky, and as she watched, it brightened to gold, spreading like a herald across the grey.

Suddenly, from far up the valley, came a faint cry.

Monica listened intently. Ah, there it came again, nearer this time.

With her hands to her mouth she gave an answering hail, once, twice, then turned and re-entered the cave. Already the wan light had crept across the floor, had reached Dick's prostrate form.

His eyes were open, and he smiled at her as she came to him. "They have found us at last, then. I heard you call," he said. "For the love of Mike, Monica, give me my clothes and go outside and keep 'em off!"

"I'll help you, all in good time," she replied, as she knelt beside him. "Dick, before they come I want to tell you something, but it needed terrors and the fear of death to show me that you were right. Dick, I—I'm only a primitive woman, after all!"

In her eyes he saw this time, without a shadow of doubt, that which only a lover can see—the splendour of a soul surprised for the first time into love.

## A BUTTERFLY IN PICCADILLY.

**F**LITTING and flaunting willy-nilly,  
Neither afraid nor shy,  
From none knows where to Piccadilly  
Has flown a butterfly.

From what eternal chrysalis  
Or fabulous cocoon  
Comes it, as fleeting as a kiss  
And soft-hued as the moon?

No garden here, no magic scents  
To lure it on the wing;  
No petals folded into tents  
For noontide slumbering.

Here only through the stony place  
The stone-hard people fare,  
Nor pause to heed the shimmering trace  
Such beauty leaves in air.

It finds no white-belled valley-lily  
To rest and dream upon;  
It finds no peace in Piccadilly,  
And now is gone, is gone.

From what eternal chrysalis  
Or fabulous cocoon  
Came it, as fleeting as a kiss  
And soft-hued as the moon?

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

“‘You don’t like my spats,’ he persisted.  
 ‘Righto. Well, I don’t like your hair scragged  
 back like a charwoman’s.’”



# SYNONYMS

By A. WHATOFF ALLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

**W**HITE spats and an intellectual forehead are almost equally exacting possessions. They carry with them disabilities as well as distinction. Just as a pair of white spats forbids the horizontal and entails the preservation of unswervingly perpendicular creases in trousers, so an intellectual forehead forbids, among other things, the wearing of a fringe and entails a mode of hairdressing more likely to give prominence to the outward and visible sign of mental capacity.

It is to a consciousness of these two facts that the domestic troubles of the Farringtons must be attributed—a consciousness which, dormant during the rapturous days of a honeymoon in Italy, rapidly reawakened when the honeymoon was over. Within a month of the return of Clare and Michael Farrington to earth and a house in Chelsea—Clare had insisted on Chelsea: that

forehead again!—each of them recognised that something was amiss.

Michael, with that white-spattish mind of his, began to realise the disabilities attaching to a wife with an intellectual forehead, and Clare to wrinkle her intellectual forehead over the all too blatant disabilities of a white-spattish mind. Michael, for instance, was soon stating openly that he could not grasp the mentality of a girl who wore hideously “artistic” garments and scragged back her hair from her forehead when she would look “stunnin’” in homespuns and a fringe, any more than he could fathom how any girl could prefer to sit poring over calf-bound books of verse when she might be swiping a golf ball down the fairway in perfectly “toppin’” weather. Clare, on the other hand, began to wonder—audibly and with perfect diction—how she had come to marry a man tactless enough

to invite notice of his out-size in feet by decking them with white spats, who conceived of rhythm only in relation to the golf swing, who preferred limericks to *vers libre*, and whose vocabulary of praise was limited to "stunnin'" and "toppin'."

Had it not been for the cross-word puzzle, the crisis might, perhaps, have been avoided. But the ruthless onward sweep of intellectual progress cannot be stayed. The cross-word puzzle came, seized upon the mind of Clare Farrington and swept it into a whirlpool of synonyms. There were cross-word puzzle parties at the house in Chelsea—"circles" Clare called them—to which came artistically clad girls with scragged-back hair, and pale young men with earnest expressions, to sit in Clare's drawing-room and wrestle with the puzzle of Life as presented on a slip of squared paper.

Michael meanwhile, more white-spattish than ever, frowned, spoke of "stoopid crazes," and sedulously made appointments for "circle" afternoons.

On the afternoon of the crisis Michael, returning home earlier than he had intended, hung up his hat, opened his mouth, and emitted a roar which, by a trained ear, might have been interpreted as "Clare!" Then, receiving no reply, he strode along the hall, flung open the drawing-room door, received an impression of a dozen or so intellectual foreheads bowed over a dozen or so slips of paper on a dozen or so pairs of knees, of an atmosphere of intense mental conflict, of the surge of stupendous intellectual forces, and was hastily withdrawing with a muttered "Good lor'—sorry!" when he caught Clare's eye, and, in obedience to an imperious jerk of her head, entered, closed the door, and ponderously tip-toed to her side.

"There's tea there, Michael," she whispered, nodding to a table. "But don't clatter the cups."

Michael gulped down half a cup of tepid tea and began to munch biscuits. There came a warning "Sh!" from the direction of Clare, and with a sigh he abandoned the biscuits and wondered a little resentfully, as he crossed to the fireplace and lolled against the mantel-piece, why there was no bread-and-butter. Biscuits made no end of a row—in your own head, anyway.

He produced a cigarette, placed it between his lips, and stood, match in hand, disconsolately glancing round the room. In that calm and stilly atmosphere, he felt,

the striking of a match would reverberate like the crack of doom.

"Clue number five across," said a languid voice; "an antiquated style of painting. That must be Futurism. Yes, Futurism. It gives us the 'm' for number eleven down—Maeterlinck. Exquisite!"

There followed a murmur of approval—during which Michael struck his match—pencils were busy, and then again silence, while Michael reflected on the providential noiselessness of lighted cigarettes.

There came a touch on his sleeve, and, glancing round, he found himself gazing into the appealing eyes of a certain Miss Crawford, the only one of Clare's friends, as far as he could remember, who might have worn a fringe, had she chosen, without disloyalty to her forehead.

"Fifteen letters, Mr. Farrington," she whispered. "Beginning with 'p' and ending with 's,' meaning 'like parchment.' I'm a dreadful duffer. Can't you help?"

Michael shook his head. "Never do 'em," he said.

Michael, be it said to his credit, fully intended to whisper. He was not aware that to him a whisper, as commonly understood, was a constitutional impossibility. He knew, of course, that his voice, which in honeymoon days had been likened by Clare to the deep rich tones of a cathedral organ, had recently been described by her as a creator of "fog-horn cacophony," but he had no idea that, when fully throttled down, its carrying power exceeded that of other voices. Moreover, he was stooping, with lips close to Miss Crawford's ear, when he answered, and did not see the deepening of the furrows on the intellectual foreheads or the glances of pained surprise levelled at him.

"Don't you care for them?" whispered Miss Crawford.

Once again he shook his head. "Hate 'em," he confided. "They're all pretty good rot, if you ask me. Just a stoopid craze, what?"

This time he saw the frowns, saw the resentful eyes, heard Clare's exasperated "Michael!" and with a muttered "Sorry!" crossed to the door, opened it and went out.

In the hall he hesitated, still gripping the handle, and then he slammed the door with a resounding bang, grinned, thrust his hands into his pockets and whistled his way to the library.

There, an hour later, Clare found him sprawling in an armchair and noisily

munching biscuits, slowly crossed the room, rested an elbow on the mantelpiece and frowned at the toe of her shoe as it impatiently tapped the fender. He glanced up at her and smiled.

"Toppin' good biscuits," he confided.

Clare's foot tapped a little more rapidly.

"Stunnin'," he added.

Her foot stopped abruptly.

"Michael," she said, "I have quite made up my mind, after your behaviour this afternoon, that we cannot continue like this."

"Didn't know the circus was on," he told her, "or I wouldn't have barged in. Stunnin' girl, Miss Crawford—what?"

"You behaved abominably, Michael, odiously, disgracefully," she said. (Clare, be it noted, had attained a mastery of synonyms.) "Never in my life have I felt so ashamed, so mortified, and that is saying something. You disturbed everyone. First the biscuits——"

"Couldn't help the biscuits," he protested. "The tea was cold."

She raised an eyebrow inquiringly.

"If the tea hadn't been cold, I'd have sopped 'em in it," he explained.

Clare nodded. "I can well believe that," she answered frigidly.

"And you fetched me in, anyway," he reminded her. "If you hadn't tipped me the wink——"

"I invited you in, Michael," she interrupted, "in the hope that you might feel inclined to make some small amends, some little reparation, for your past discourtesy to my friends. I hoped, though I scarcely expected, that you might for once summon up the manners to notice their presence, to take cognisance of their existence, to make an effort to meet them on a footing of intellectual equality, to talk to them——"

"Didn't dare open my mouth," mumbled Michael.

"I seem to recollect your opening it with devastating results," she told him. "But we won't discuss this afternoon."

"Righto!" he agreed heartily.

"This afternoon," she went on, with a touch of colour in her cheeks, "was typical, symbolical, emblematic, and it has brought matters to a crisis, precipitated a decision which I have long been on the verge of making."

"Ah?" said Michael genially, reaching for another biscuit.

"It furnished a very fair specimen of the sort of existence which we have been leading

for the last few months—the constant friction, the perpetual irritation, the continual clashing of two temperaments so diametrically opposed, so utterly at variance, so radically antagonistic——"

"Whew!" whistled Michael softly.

"I'm going to end it all!" she cried, suddenly facing him with clenched hands and blazing eyes. "I can stand no more of it! I'm sick of it—I'm nauseated with everything!"

"Meanin' me?" inquired Michael.

With an effort she recovered her poise. "We may as well recognise the truth, Michael," she said calmly, "and admit that we have made a gigantic blunder, a colossal mistake. We should never have married. We merely irritate each other, fret each other, annoy each other. You would irritate anyone, I fancy, and when you come into contact with someone whose mental calibre is so different from your own——"

"Meanin' you?" interjected Michael, with a grin.

Clare bit her lip.

"Quite frankly, Michael, you irritate me beyond endurance," she said. "What with your white spats——"

"Toppin' good spats, Clare."

"They typify you, Michael: splendour at the wrong end. What with your white spats and your utter inability to display the slightest interest in any intellectual pursuit——"

"Meanin' cross-word puzzles," remarked Michael. "Stoopid craze, if you ask me. Putrid waste of time."

"—and your language," she added. "The correct meaning of 'putrid,' Michael, is 'rotten.'"

"That's what I meant," said Michael; "rotten waste of time."

Clare gave a sigh of resignation.

"The fact that cross-word puzzles happen to interest me," she said, "naturally carries no weight with you."

Michael shrugged his shoulders.

"It's all jolly well, Clare," he said resentfully, "pickin' me to pieces like this, but what about yourself? You don't like my spats——"

"That's a very small point," she interrupted. "I said that they typify you, that's all. I think they typify you very accurately."

"You don't like my spats," he persisted. "Righto. Well, I don't like your hair scragged back like a charwoman's. Spoils

you. You'd look stunnin' with a fringe. And I don't like your sloppy clothes. Bits o' curtain. You'd look toppin' in tweeds. You find fault with the way I speak. Righto. Well, if you ask me, you'd make yourself no end more sociable if you came off your highbrow perch and talked like a human being instead of a dictionary. Save a lot o' breath, too. You don't like it because I won't be intellectual, and forget to wash, like your long-haired pals, and sit porin' over stoopid puzzles when I might be playin' golf. Righto again. That's me, and I can't help it, and if you ask me you'd be all the more pleasant to live with if you washed out some of your stoopid posin' and took a bit more interest in golf."

Michael lay back again in his chair and took another biscuit.

"Of course," began Clare, "from an irredeemable Philistine——"

"And if you think I'm goin' to waste my time porin' over stoopid puzzles," interjected Michael in a biscuit-muffled voice, "you're backin' a loser. I wouldn't touch the rotten things with a barge pole."

Clare, very calm, very cold, very dignified, shrugged her shoulders, crossed to the door in silence, and paused.

"Very well, Michael," she said. "Since you persist in perpetuating the present intolerable situation, I shall be leaving you in the morning. Perhaps you will telephone for a taxi to be here at nine-thirty, will you?"

"What the dooce——" exclaimed Michael, springing to his feet. But the door had already closed behind her.

For a few moments Michael stood, biscuit in hand, gazing at the door with troubled eyes. Then, with sudden savagery, he flung the biscuit on the floor and stamped on it.

\* \* \* \* \*

At nine-thirty the following morning Michael turned from the window from which he had watched Clare's taxi disappear round the corner of the street, and did "a bit o' thinkin'." Clare, having carefully packed her precious dictionaries, her cross-word puzzle pads and her calf-bound volumes of *vers libre*, had left him. Amazing, but true. Just as well, perhaps, he reflected. It was no good perpetuating—how had Clare expressed it? No good hanging on and pretending to be happy when they weren't, was what she had meant. Things had somehow changed lately. A few months ago Clare would never have dreamed of

picking him to pieces because he wore spats and loathed cross-word puzzles.

Michael wrinkled his forehead. It went deeper than that, he felt; but just where to look for the root of the trouble—— Oh, well, it wasn't his fault, anyway! Clare must get over her tantrums. He wasn't going to chase after her, and he certainly wasn't going to give way and waste his time on a craze which would be out of fashion before he had mastered the idea of it. He wasn't going to own himself in the wrong, either. He wasn't in the wrong. He hadn't run away from Clare. Let Clare come back—as, of course, she would—and own that she had behaved abominably—as, of course, she had—and they could talk about other things afterwards.

Michael thrust out his jaw and told himself that, as far as he was concerned, there would be "no knucklin' under."

It was after a week of silence, during which Michael's frown deepened appreciably, that Clare's letter arrived—a letter of polysyllabic synonyms, cataloguing his failings and telling him that she intended to stay permanently in the country with her mother, and that he must bring himself to realise that the separation was final, the breach irreparable. She could not, she explained, be expected to sacrifice her individuality in an endeavour to model herself on lines more suited to his æsthetic taste, or to lower her intellectual standards to a point where she could meet him on common ground. The idea that he might rise any appreciable distance to meet her was, she hinted, too grotesque for serious consideration.

Michael's lower jaw, as he slipped the letter into his pocket, protruded a little further. Clare, of course, did not mean it. Clare—the real Clare—the Clare who had once snuggled into the same armchair with him, run her fingers through his hair and laughed so happily at his protests—could not possibly exist for long without him, any more than he could exist for long without Clare—that particular Clare. He had only to hold out and show himself as strong-willed and determined as she, and sooner or later she would return to her senses. Once again Michael told himself that there must be "no knucklin' under."

There came no more letters from Clare, and every day during the following weeks Michael found it necessary to strengthen his morale and stiffen his resistance by a frequent repetition of the same slogan. "No knucklin' under," he would mutter

when he caught himself thinking of her and wondering if, after all, he could not do something to heal the breach. "No knucklin' under; Clare's got to learn."

took to wandering aimlessly about the house, peering into every room as if hoping that he might come across her tucked away in some secluded corner; and when, for the sake of



"Michael . . . picked up a dictionary from the writing-desk, hurled it into the waste-paper basket."

All the same, it was hateful teaching her; and life was pretty putrid, and if Clare was feeling half as bad about it as he was . . .

Michael became daily more moody. He

sleepy servants, he was obliged to abandon his wandering, he would sit far into the night, with wrinkled forehead and troubled eyes, in his library chair. He began to neglect his appearance. Several times he omitted his



morning shave. Once, at least, he forgot to put on his spats.

It was on the day of the forgotten spats, eight weeks after Clare's departure, that Mrs. Maidment suddenly walked into the library, raised her eyebrows at the spatless, unshaven figure, with the haggard eyes and wrinkled forehead, that was sprawling in the chair, and seated herself on the couch.

Clare's mother had not her daughter's intellectual forehead, but she had an air of quiet determination. She had not, perhaps, Clare's mastery of synonyms, but she had rarely been known to express herself ambiguously. It had been said of her that she might mix her metaphors, but would never mince her words.

"What's all this bunkum, Michael, and how much longer is it going to last?" she demanded. "As far as I can make out, it's all a lot of nonsense, but what with crossword puzzles and spats and temperaments and biscuits and intellect and golf, I can't make head nor tail of it. But if two nice young things like you and Clare can't live together without squabbling, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. It's ridiculous."

"Stoopid," agreed Michael.

"Clare, I'm sure, is a very amiable, attractive girl——"

"Stunnin'."

"—and although I can't say you're exactly attractive, Michael, I've always found you amiable enough. No, don't argue with me. I don't know who's to blame, but I do know that if you don't soon do something about it, the consequences will be serious for Clare. She's a highly-strung, sensitive girl, and she can't stand much more of the kind of suffering which you—which this affair is inflicting on her. You'd hardly know her. Terribly changed! I'm worried out of my life about her, and if it's just your stupid pride which is preventing your patching things up, it's time you realised your duty as a husband and came down home to see her."

"If Clare's ill——" began Michael.

"She is—dreadfully," Mrs. Maidment assured him. "She's mentally ill—unbalanced—hardly knows what she's doing. I'm quite concerned for her reason."

"What's the doctor say?" inquired Michael.

"My dear Michael, it's not a case for a doctor; it's a case for a husband. And now run along and get your hat, and we'll catch the four-twenty-five train down. Never mind shaving."

"No," said Michael.

For the next half-hour Mrs. Maidment talked, her discourse punctuated by periodic "Noes" from Michael, and at length she rose with a sigh.

"Very well, Michael," she said unhappily. "If you persist in refusing, I can do no more."

"You can give Clare my love," he said, as he saw her to the front door, "and tell her that whenever she likes to roll up I'll be hanging around and glad to see her. No, on second thoughts, you'd better put it this way: Should she at any time, period, era or epoch, discover herself to be a prey to nos-nos-nostalgia, I fancy, is the word, and feels that a sojourn under this roof might benefit, improve, or ameliorate her condition, she will find me waiting in expectation, anticipation, procrastination—no, not that——"

"Poor boy!" sighed Mrs. Maidment, tapping him sympathetically on the shoulder, and hurried down the steps.

Michael closed the door, returned to the library, and flung himself again into his chair. Clare should have known better than to imagine that he could be caught that way; he told himself. But it was a good sign. Clare was obviously weakening when she had to send mother as an envoy, a scout, a reconnoitring party, an advance guard.

"Good lor'!" muttered Michael. "How the rotten habit grows!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The following afternoon Michael, still unshaven, spatless, and haggard of eye, was again sprawling in his armchair, when the sound of a taxi throbbing outside the house attracted his attention, and he sprang to his feet, strode to the window, and was just in time to see Clare paying the driver.

He awaited her in the hall, lolling against the drawing-room door, heard her key in the latch, saw her enter, stepped forward to greet, and felt a hand gently thrusting him aside.

"Not yet, please, Michael; give me time to change my clothes," she said, and scurried, bag in hand, up the stairs.

Michael returned disconsolately to his chair. For half an hour he waited, frowning and muttering to himself, and then the door was flung open and Clare stood framed in the doorway.

"Michael," she said "look at me."

Michael looked, long and searchingly, and nodded.

"Is—is it better, Michael?" she asked

anxiously, advancing slowly until she stood in front of him.

"I am amazed," said Michael at last. "I am amazed, dumbfounded, stupefied, overwhelmed. I must congratulate you, Clare; I must felicitate you. But I always said—or averred—that you would look altogether charming and alluring with a fringe."

She glanced at him keenly and sighed.

"And the rest?" she demanded.

"Unless I am making a grievous error," he said, "a serious mistake, or—or——"

"Or a ghastly bloomer," she suggested.

"—or a ghastly blunder," he corrected, "you have abandoned the homely curtains and are wearing tweeds."

She nodded.

"Toppin' good tweeds, too," she told him.

He gave a little shudder.

"The excellence of the material, Clare, is of small account," he said. "It is the æsthetic effect which is of supreme importance, and that, I must admit, is altogether beyond criticism. And now let us consider your feet. Most suitably, aptly, and appropriately clad. Unless once again I am making a grievous error——"

"Oh, cut it out, Michael!" she pleaded. "They're spats—white spats—toppin' good white spats. Michael, don't you understand? I've—I've been trying."

"I must confess, Clare, that you have—very," he said.

"I've been trying, Michael," she said, dropping on her knees beside his chair, "trying to make myself more—more what you wanted me to be. I didn't mean to try. I meant to make you knuckle under and own that you were wrong and apologise, and all the rest of it. But you wouldn't budge. You wouldn't catch on, so I had to do something. Life was too—too putrid for words without you."

"The correct meaning of the word 'putrid,' Clare, is 'rotten,'" he reminded her.

She nodded. "That's what I meant; too rotten for words without you," she answered. "Michael, old thing, didn't you find it a little bit putrid without me?"

"I detected a certain insipidity," he admitted.

Clare sighed again.

"And then, when mother told me how terribly changed you were, how ill you looked—mentally ill, she said—I had to come at once. Mother was quite concerned for your reason."

"Mrs. Maidment is a woman of perception, of acumen, of *nous*," he told her.

Clare nodded.

"Tommy Sumner was down at mother's," she went on. "He has been helping me with my golf. I'm getting on top-hole. Handicap ten. What's yours, Michael?"

"Scratch," he informed her; "in other words, rub, mark, dig or tear with the nails."

"Oh, Michael, come off your perch!" she begged. "Tommy helped me with my language, too. He talks rippin' slang, you know, and he says I'm getting it A 1."

"A shipping term commonly used at Lloyds," he put in, "denoting that a vessel, a boat, a ship, a barque——"

"Denoting that I really have tried, Michael," she said, laying a hand on his, "that I really do want to be what you want me to be, that I'd rather never read another poem, never do another cross-word puzzle——"

"I trust, Clare, that after all—that you will make no such reckless—or ill-considered vow as that," he said.

"I've burnt 'em, Michael," she told him, "burnt all the books of poems and the dictionaries and the cross-word puzzle pads—put 'em on the bonfire in the kitchen garden and watched 'em go up in smoke. Mother thought I was mad, and came dashin' up to London to see you about me. I was mad. I am mad—for you, Michael." She glanced at his impassive face with anxious eyes. "Michael, you haven't shaved," she accused, "and your hair needs cutting."

He ran his fingers round his chin.

"A little hirsute," he admitted, "a trifle cap-cap-capillose, I fancy, is the word; but that was intended to please you, Clare. I, too, have been trying."

He paused and glanced at her expectantly, but she shook her head.

"Push along, old thing," she said. "I'm not saying it."

"I, too, have been trying to model myself on lines which would make a stronger appeal to your æsthetic taste. The hairiness is intentional, as also the omission to shave. I may mention, by the way—*en passant*—*en route*—not quite synonymous, the latter, but near enough—that for the last twenty-four hours or so my hands have been strangers to soap and water. For hours a day I have stood before my looking-glass—or mirror—endeavouring to acquire that earnestness of facial expression which you have always admired in others, and for long

hours at night I have sat in this library diligently, sedulously, and assiduously studying the intricate art of the cross-word puzzle, primarily to please you, but none the less acquiring incidentally a superb command of English synonyms, which you may or may not have noticed."

"Oh, Michael, be—be yourself! Be human," she pleaded. "I—I hate you like that!"

He glanced at her with eager eyes.

"You mean, Clare, that all the labour I have expended, the lucubrations, the midnight wrestling——"

"All a wash-out, Michael," she told him, "except that it tells me that—that you did find life pretty rotten without me. Please, please, Michael, tell me that you did!"

Michael heaved a gigantic sigh, passed a

hand across his forehead, rose from his chair, picked up a dictionary from the writing-desk, hurled it into the waste-paper basket, and then, resuming his seat, drew her towards him until his lips were close to her ear.

"I don't mind tellin' you, Clare, old thing," he whispered, "that life without you was a rotten bad egg."

\* \* \* \* \*

And there, with Clare nestling—as she herself only a few weeks earlier might, perhaps, have expressed it—within her husband's circumambient arm, they sat for some time in silence, until Clare, without raising her head from his shoulder, spoke.

"Michael!"

"Hullo, Clare?"

"Toppin', old thing, isn't it?"

"Stunnin'!"

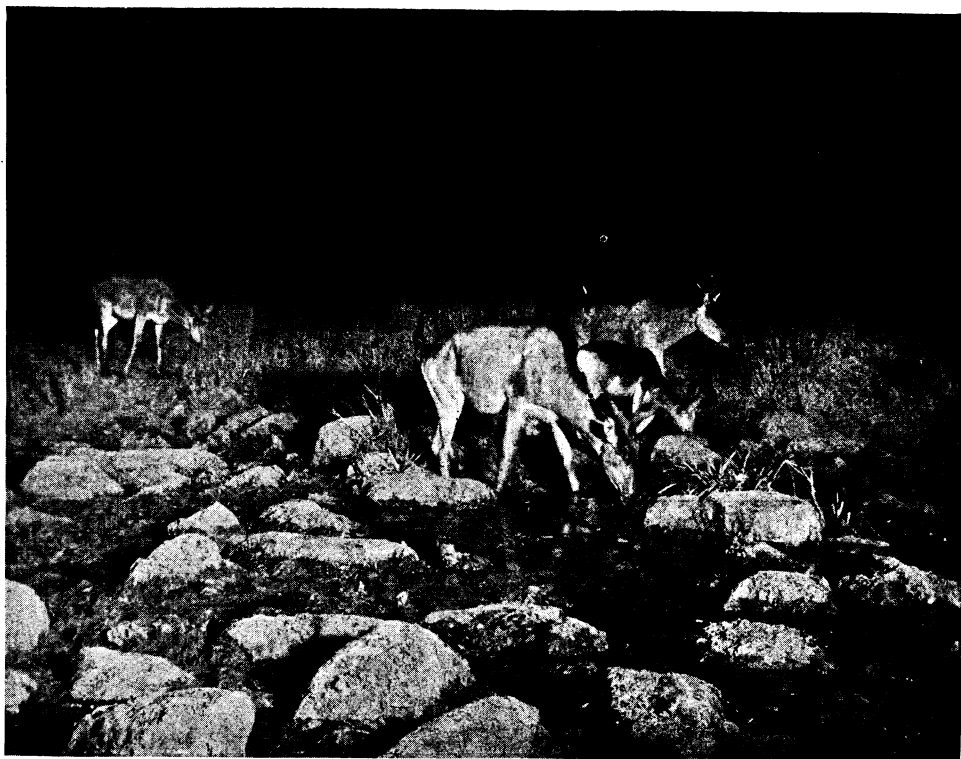
## THE POPPY LULLABY.

**I**N Poppy-Land, Red-Poppy-Land,  
The Poppy babies rest,  
Dreaming, oh, so drowsily,  
Down in their grassy nest.  
I've seen them sleeping where they stood,  
Each in its pretty scarlet hood—  
*And why not sleep, my dear, oh, why?*  
This is the Poppy lullaby!

IN Poppy-Land, White-Poppy-Land,  
The Poppy babies lie,  
Closing, oh, so drowsily.  
Every wee black eye.  
I've seen them sleeping all the night,  
Each in its gown of milky white—  
*And why not sleep, my dear, oh, why?*  
This is the Poppy lullaby.

And there's a Yellow-Poppy-Land,  
Where Poppy babies peep—  
The sea-wind, oh, so drowsily,  
Is singing them to sleep.  
There many a darling little fellow  
Is nodding in his suit of yellow—  
"Hush! hush!" he hears the sea-wind sigh,  
*"And why not sleep, my dear, oh, why?"*  
This is the Poppy lullaby.

MAY BYRON.



ORYX.

# THE CINEMA AND THE AFRICAN WATER-HOLE

By MAJOR A. RADCLYFFE DUGMORE, F.R.G.S.

*Author of "Camera Adventures in the African Wilds," etc.*

*Photographs by the Author*

THE camp was still hidden in the darkness of the African night when at the early hour of half-past four my boy came to the tent and aroused me with the inevitable morning tea. It was time to get up and leave the comfortable warmth of the blankets, time to make ready for the day of waiting and watching at the water-hole which had been selected with so much care and deliberation.

Everything depends on the choice of a place that combines the necessary attraction for the animals with the photographic

requirements. For instance, a water-hole may be beautiful and be visited daily by numerous animals, but if it is not possible to find a site for the screen or "blind" on the lee side, it would be quite useless from the camera man's point of view.

Hundreds of miles had been covered, all sorts of country visited, and at last in this desert land a water-hole had been found which promised well. Unfortunately it had the disadvantage of being very much scattered—that is to say, there were many small pools in the otherwise dry river-bed

distributed over a distance of several hundred yards, so that there would always be the chance that the animals might select the water furthest from where the "blind" had been built. However, that could not be helped.

As animals are very likely to visit water-holes about sunrise, it was advisable to reach the "blind" before daylight; so, after a hearty breakfast, I started with my camera bearers. It is eerie work moving about in the wild lands of East Africa during the dark; objects take on strange and terrifying shapes. An innocent ant-hill becomes a ferocious rhino; a rock looks like a crouching lion; everything is unreal and

promise. Hasn't he lain awake at night thinking of all that would happen before the sun would sink again in the west? He does not say *might* happen: he is an optimist, otherwise he would never hunt wild beasts with the camera. He is the embodiment of the hope eternal, and equally is he the personification of patience.

By the time we reached the "blind," which had been made the previous day, the land was bathed in that curious pre-dawn glow, and the gradual lighting up of the land is like the developer on an exposed plate, which is so beautiful and so mysterious. The porters handed all the photographic paraphernalia into the little shelter,



WATERBUCK.

uncanny; birds uttering strange cries startle one; jackals and hyenas slink away as noiseless as ghosts, and it is hard to tell what they are; herds of antelope and zebra scamper off with a clattering of hoofs that awakens the echoes of the night; wait-a-bit thorns, like unseen beasts of prey, lay hold of one's clothes or, still worse, one's hands, and take toll of cloth or flesh. Ragged pieces of loose lava bruise the feet, and make walking both difficult and noisy. It was all unpleasant, and we longed for the dawn. The strange, cold light that silhouetted the distant cone-shaped hills proclaimed the coming of the new day, a day that promised so much; for each day the camera man goes out with his battery of cameras is full of

and then returned to camp, carrying back with them the day's supply of water for the Safari. I was entirely alone, and hoped that I should not see one of my fellow-men until the sun had made its day's journey from the east to the west. There was much to be done in the way of setting up the cinema cameras, arranging every article that might be required in such a position that it was readily and quietly accessible, for once an animal comes

within sight there must be no sound to arouse suspicion, and all movement must be reduced as much as possible. The different lenses that might be required were laid on velvet. The film boxes wrapped in red flannel, the rifle placed ready in case of emergency, a comfortable seat was made on a large, fairly smooth stone covered with a blanket. What luxury, the reader may say, but the blanket served two purposes. If one has to sit still for twelve long hours, a certain degree of comfort is essential, and the blanket deadens sound. The next thing to do was to remove the heavy marching boots and put on soft Indian moccasins, for the ground was stony and these ensured silence.

Perhaps half an hour was spent in all these arrangements, and by that time the warm glow in the sky told that the sun was nearing the horizon. In the soft light some objects were seen moving about on the slope of the hill a few hundred yards away. It was a small herd of oryx—the beautiful dove-coloured antelope with the conspicuous black markings and the long sharply-pointed straight horns. In the dull light it was impossible to make out which way they were moving, as they blended in so perfectly with their surroundings. A little

gold in the warm light, and gradually the handsome creatures vanished over the hill-top.

Soon the plaintive call of the sandgrouse was heard, followed immediately by the singing whirl of sharp-pointed wings, and the sandgrouse came in countless small flocks, darting down to the pools with lightning speed and then away again after taking but a sip of the water. Next came pigeons and doves of many kinds, and the air vibrated with the sound of their wings as they flew from bush to bush and pool to



THE SCREEN AND BLIND FROM WHICH PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN.

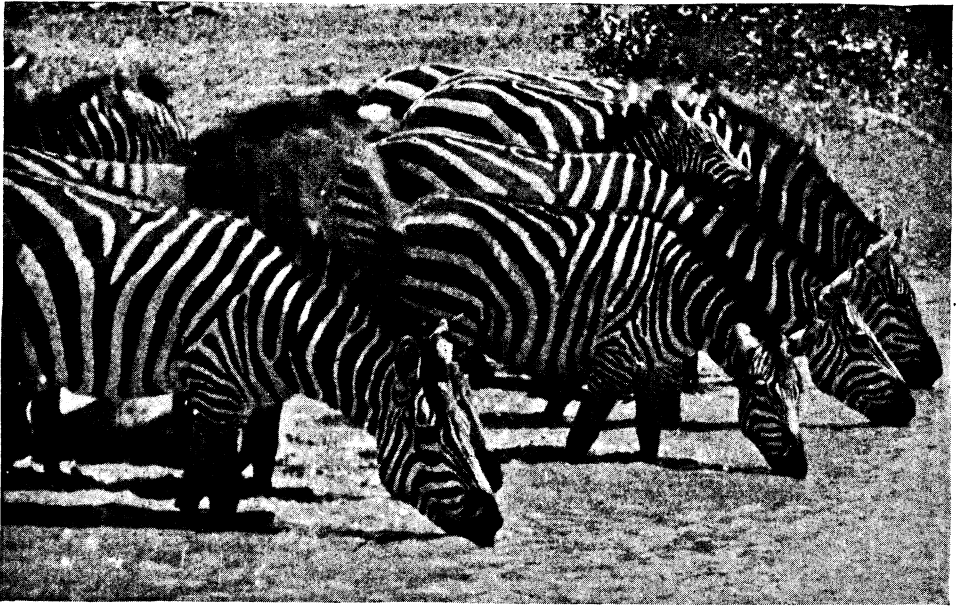
later, the sun like a ball of fire came into view, and, with the magical quickness of the tropics, daylight, dazzling in its intensity, had lighted up the parched landscape of this desert country; and the oryx were seen to be moving away. It was a bad beginning and very disappointing, but still there were many hours ahead, and much might happen before the sun reddened again. The oryx moved with aggravating slowness—a few steps, then a long wait, perhaps a little game of “catch-as-catch-can” now and then to relieve the monotony, or a nibbling of the scarce, parched grass that shone like

pool, ever nervous and restless. I could not help wondering why they seemed frightened all the time, when suddenly the explanation came in the form of a flash and a whirl as a hawk swooped and caught one of the many pigeons, while the others in frantic haste sought the shelter of the scattered thorn bushes. For a few minutes the world about me was as silent as the grave. Then again came the sound of the flying, fluttering thousands. Tragedies come and go quickly. There is no time in the lives of the wild for lamentations. One of the number may go and the others note the lesson, that's

all. But the pigeons and doves had other enemies than those that appeared so quickly and mysteriously from the deep blue sky. In the turbid pools of evil-smelling water, hidden even from the sharp eyes of the birds, were large turtles with small, cruel eyes and powerful jaws that struck with deadly speed and precision at the thoughtless bird that lingered too long at the edge of the pool. So quickly and silently was the deed done that it passed unnoticed by all except perhaps the one or two that were nearest the scene.

The next visitors were the two species of vultures—the common black and the handsome white-and-black ones. These, in

of film. When once a reasonable amount had been secured, the subject was exhausted, but the scene itself was of constant interest, for the birds were generally within thirty to a hundred yards of the "blind." Unfortunately I became so interested in watching them that a family of wart-hogs approached unobserved until they were within a few feet of me. As I had the extreme long-focus lens on the cinema camera, it was impossible to get a picture of them, so I foolishly attempted to change lenses; but though I was as careful as possible, the sharp-eyed beasts caught sight of the movement and disappeared with extraordinary rapidity.



ZEBRAS DRINKING.

company with crows, came in large numbers for their morning drink. Now and then hawks of several kinds arrived at the pools, and, strange to relate, they sat alongside the pigeons without causing any excitement; and occasionally a large, dignified eagle came for a few minutes, but seemed out of place in the strange mixed company. One by one the grotesque marabou storks arrived, and strutted about in a ridiculous, would-be stately manner, their white breasts and black wings giving them the appearance of men in tail-coats and white shirt-fronts.

Photographing this strange assortment of birds was an easy task, and there was a great temptation to squander an endless amount

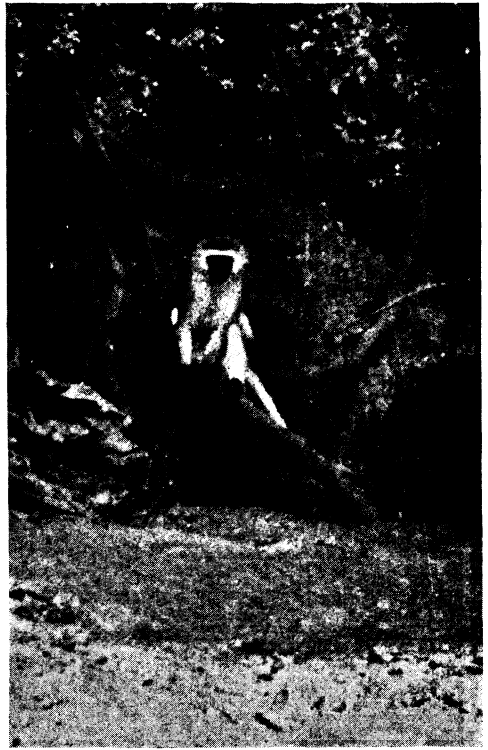
These wart-hogs are strange beasts. It seems all wrong that they should have their homes underground in long, deep burrows; yet that is where they live. The habit of making these burrows makes them very unpopular among the white settlers of the country, owing to the danger of horses breaking their legs by falling in. In appearance the wart-hog can scarcely boast of facial good looks, the wart-like excrescences beneath the eyes and the protruding tusks producing a curiously ugly effect. In build they are striking, having clean-cut lines, while the neck is adorned with a mane of long bristles. When running, the smooth, straight, tufted tail is held



upright, and gives a most ridiculous effect. The animals are very shy, so much so that during my two previous trips to East Africa I never succeeded in securing even a moderately good photograph of them. Bearing this in mind, I determined to be extra careful and keep a sharp look-out in case any others came near the water-hole.

One of the great difficulties in making and using a "blind" is to combine concealment with visibility, or, should I say, visibility with invisibility. It is quite easy to make a blind which hides the person completely from even the keenest-eyed animals, but to arrange it so that the openings will not only allow of a clear field of vision in all directions, but will also admit of the camera being swung to cover all points, is a most difficult task. If there is one part of the landscape that cannot be seen easily, it is a safe bet that the animals will approach that way. Just the same with the camera; the animal will be sure to stand on any spot not covered by the apparatus.

It happened that I could not arrange my place of concealment so as to give an uninter-



GREEN MONKEY.



JACKAL.

rupted view without revealing the camera, and, of course, it was along the concealed portion of the landscape that a silent-footed jackal came. Had I not had the warning of the pigs, I might have missed him; but by good luck I saw the silver-coated creature and cautiously trained the camera in his direction, got him fairly well in focus, and succeeded in securing quite an interesting piece of film. Of course the sound of the camera startled the shy animal, so that he became alarmed and did not go to the water. While he was looking about and trying to discover the cause of the noise made by the camera, something, perhaps a fly or a bee, stung his tail, and he forgot his alarm long enough to make a most amusing and vigorous attack on his enemy. This, of course, was faithfully recorded on the film. It is not often that the jackal is obliging enough to give the camera man an opportunity for a daylight portrait. His prowling is done usually between dusk and dawn, when, by the light of the moon or stars, he hunts his prey, such as mice, rats, rabbits, hyrax, and probably such birds as roost on the ground. He does not, however, depend entirely on his skill as a hunter for



his food. By nature he is a scavenger, and nothing is too loathsome for him to eat. When lions or other of the larger hunting beasts make a killing, the jackals have an uncanny way of learning of it, and they appear on the scene as though by magic and as silently as ghosts, and with the hyenas they stand around watching for opportunities to steal scraps of meat. The lions object to this, as might naturally be supposed, and they frequently snap at the thieves, but I have never known of them catching, or even injuring, the agile creatures. After the jackal that I had photographed had succeeded in vanquishing

frequent careful stalking, to get closer than within about a hundred yards of the wary birds, and at that distance a good photograph was scarcely possible. But now I was to have a wonderful opportunity, for the great bird came along with long, deliberate strides, and within a few minutes was in the sandy river-bed. Here he became more cautious, and stopped frequently to look about to see if the coast was clear. That he was coming to drink there was no doubt, so I dared not risk starting the camera for fear that the noise would frighten him away. I confess that I actually trembled with pleasurable excitement as I stood



ANOTHER ZEBRA GROUP.

his biting enemy, he moved away as silently as he had come.

Towards noon I was delighted to see a very unexpected visitor appearing on the skyline of the opposite hill, for the last thing I had counted on photographing was the greater bustard. They are shy birds, and never before had I seen one in the immediate vicinity of a water-hole; but here was one coming and, unless he changed his course, would soon be within range of the camera. That I was excited goes without saying, and it was not to be wondered at, considering that until this day I had never been able, in spite of

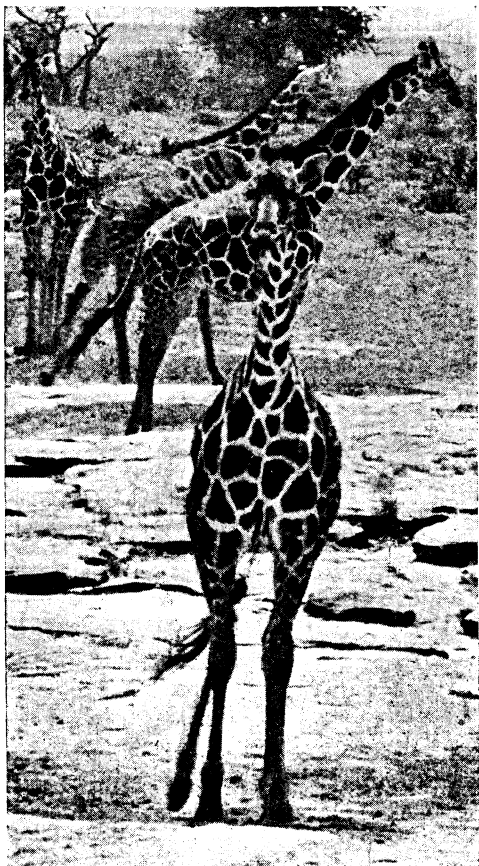
there holding the turning handle and staring through the focussing finder. At last the handsome bird stood at the edge of a small pool and, after a final careful examination of the surroundings, sat down very deliberately on his heels and commenced drinking. At the same instant I started turning the handle of the camera, and made what was probably the first film that ever recorded the greater bustard sitting down to his drink. For almost exactly half an hour the thirsty bird continued to sip the water, taking a mouthful every few seconds.

During this time a Grevy zebra came into view, his head alone being visible over the

arid hill a few hundred yards away. Whether it was the advance guard of a herd or a solitary animal, there was no way of telling. It was enough for me that even one was coming to the water-hole, and there was every prospect of securing some film of the handsome creature. The bustard, having finally quenched his thirst, moved slowly away, and I had ample opportunity for getting as much film as was necessary. In the meantime the zebra had come into full view, but, unfortunately, seemed in no hurry for a drink. In a most aggravating way he stood there, clearly silhouetted against the intense blue sky, and for over half an hour, except for the perpetual swinging of his tail to keep the flies away, he scarcely moved, but, sentry-like, remained at his post. Then through the heat shimmer I caught sight of moving objects showing over the blurred outline of the yellow hill. Gradually these objects took shape, and I could distinguish the



GIRAFFES AT THE WATERSIDE.



RETICULATED GIRAFFES.

large, black, fringed ears and dark manes of many zebra. My hopes ran high, for the herd was a good-sized one, and would make a beautiful film when they reached the water-hole.

With the greatest care I examined the camera to make sure that everything was in good working order, and, having satisfied myself on that point, I sat down to wait with what patience I could muster, my whole attention riveted on the zebra. The water-hole was, in the meanwhile, a scene of perpetual activity and movement, birds of many kinds coming and going. As they were chiefly vultures, crows, marabou, pigeons and chattering weaver-birds, I did not pay much attention to what was going on, for I had used up as much film as I could spare on them.

It was unfortunate for me that I scorned these birds, because by so doing I failed to notice a family of wart-hogs that approached from an unexpected quarter, having come up-wind. How it was they had not got scent of me I cannot tell, but there they were within about twenty yards, and I hastened to train the camera on to the curious creatures as they were about to start drinking.

The old boar was standing well to one side of his family and perhaps ten yards from the water. He was a fine specimen, with large well-curved tusks projecting conspicuously from his curiously shaped jaw; the "warts" beneath his eyes were unusually large, and his long, coarse mane waving in the breeze showed almost black against the dull grey of the body. A couple of tick-birds were busily engaged hunting over the coarse skin for parasitic insects. For a moment I debated whether to start the film with the large boar, who was evidently not at all satisfied that the place was safe, or the family group—mother and five or six half-grown youngsters, that were beginning to drink. My deliberations were cut short by the boar giving a sudden start; then with incredible speed he turned and trotted away, followed immediately by the whole family, all carrying their tails pointed skywards as straight as ramrods. What had happened to cause this sudden fright I could not understand. I certainly had made no movement that could have been seen. It was very disappointing to have missed this second good opportunity in one day, but I was about to console myself with the thought that at least the zebra would soon arrive and that I should have plenty to do, when I noticed that they too had completely vanished. There could be but one explanation: human beings were in sight. Now, if there was one thing in the world that I did not want, it was man in any shape or form, and I had hoped that in this out-of-the-way spot I would have been fairly safe from interruption.

Putting my head out through the opening of the blind, I saw a cloud of pale yellow dust only a few hundred yards away, and from this cloud emerged a great mass of animals—not wild ones, but camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. Could anything have been more disturbing? That they were coming to water there could be no doubt, and yet this was a district that under normal conditions was practically uninhabited. But conditions were far from normal. Throughout British East Africa the rains, usually so reliable, had failed. For over a year the greater part of the country had been dry. Rivers had become straggling lines of golden sand that absorbed the burning rays of the equatorial sun till it scorched the feet of those who walked across; the plains and hills were parched and yellow-drab in colour; plant life that had been awakened by an occasional small shower at

the time when the semi-annual rains were due had burst their buds in hopefulness only to wither away for lack of the life-giving moisture. This was true even of the hardy mimosa or thorn trees, for they were greyish-yellow instead of their beautiful soft green. Grass, of course, was scarce and wiry, and the water-holes one by one ceased to be. The unfortunate natives were driven away from their homes by this drought in order to save their vast herds of cattle. Mile after mile the wretched people were forced to travel in their search for water, and it was some of these, Boran and Rendilli, who, coming from the far-away northern frontier, were now approaching the water-hole where I had built my "blind." And yet it was an interesting sight even though an annoying one.

The sheep and goats, in countless thousands, were driven to the small shallow pools for their much-needed drink, but the camels and strange humpback cattle were brought to one of the deep holes of spring water, around which were troughs made out of palm-tree trunks. These were filled by naked natives with rough buckets made of hide. With much difficulty and careful management the animals were allowed to come in relays, so that there would be no undue crowding of the thirst-crazed creatures. I was astonished to see such numbers of camels, which, for some reason or other, one does not associate with East Africa, but I found on inquiry that they were used almost entirely for their milk, only a very few being employed as beasts of burden. As the natives own scarcely any household goods except hides, and occasionally blankets and large gourds for carrying water or milk, beasts of burden are of small use to them.

All the tribes that own large herds of cattle live almost entirely on milk in various forms, and eat meat only when an animal dies or on account of injuries has to be killed. Such people do not cultivate the land, and lead a more or less nomadic life, following the supply of grass and water.

When I speak of the deep holes of spring water, the reader who does not happen to know the country will imagine clear, sweet, limpid water, but, unfortunately, it was neither clear, sweet, nor limpid, but rather a turbid, foul-smelling, and still more foul-tasting soda-impregnated fluid; and yet the animals, both wild and tame, like it and will even drink it in preference to purer water. The probable explanation is

that most of the non-soda water is the home of innumerable leeches, and these loathsome parasites attach themselves to the animals' mouths and throats, and probably also to the inner organs, thereby causing great discomfort. The soda water kills and dislodges the leeches.

Natives, so far as I could observe, did not object to the ill-flavoured water, but we found it hard to swallow, for though we boiled it for a quarter of an hour or more, tea, lime-juice, whisky, or even soup, failed to subdue the unpleasant flavour.

The reader must pardon this digression which, like the natives and their herds, has disturbed the photographic work at the water-hole. As I sat in the hot shelter of the "blind," watching the watering of the herds, I wondered how long the operation would last. Did it mean that the water-holes would be occupied for the rest of the day? One o'clock came, and apparently not half of the animals had been cared for. By two o'clock things looked more hopeful, and a little later the last of the herd had been watered. Then came another delay which I had not counted upon. All of the men decided to enjoy a bath, and went about it most deliberately and with no idea of haste. Their well-formed bodies were scrubbed till the black skin gleamed in the brilliant sunlight, and about this time some zebra came in sight. They saw that the water-hole was occupied, but they were several hundred yards away, and they decided apparently to wait there until the place was clear. The afternoon was half gone before the last of the natives departed, and it was interesting to note that none of them had discovered my presence. On the ridge of the hill the zebra were watching the water-hole with patient interest, and soon after the natives and their herds had vanished they began with aggravating slowness to make their way down the slope of the hill towards the scattered pools of water. How many times they stopped I cannot say, but for over an hour they kept me in suspense, sometimes coming forward a few steps and then frequently going back an equal distance. At last the leader of the little herd stood on the rocky ledge above one of the water-holes, and after a few minutes' hesitation jumped down to the river-bed, made his way to the water, and began drinking. Of course the camera was in full action. I was making my first film of the handsome Grevy zebra, one of the most beautiful of all wild creatures. The

rest of the party, seeing that all went well with their leader, lost no time in following in his tracks, and my only regret was that it was not a large herd. But that is always the way; we are never content, and invariably want more than we can get. By the time the zebra had satisfied their thirst and gone off into the shimmering distance, the afternoon was no longer young. There was perhaps an hour and a half of possible light left, and I wondered what would happen before it was time to pack up and make my way back to camp. While I was wondering, an oryx appeared, and, like the zebra, he was in no hurry. He stood there constantly switching his black tufted tail and swinging his long rapier-like horns about in his efforts to drive away the tormenting flies. My attention was so entirely riveted on the beautiful dove-coloured antelope, that I had not noticed several giraffe feeding among the trees to my right, and perhaps three or four hundred yards away, and not until one of their number came out into the open and displayed his quaint silhouette against the skyline did I see them. Many, many times had I laid in wait at water-holes and other likely places in the hopes of securing photographs of these strangely beautiful creatures, but thus far always in vain, so my feelings may be imagined when I realised that what had been my dream for years was about to come true, unless something unexpected occurred to frighten the animals away. Unfortunately, neither the oryx nor the giraffe realised the importance of haste. It seemed as though they would never come within photographic range, and all the time the light was getting more and more yellow, and the shadows stretching out longer and longer. Very soon it would be too late. There were the animals, almost within range. There were my hopes almost realised, but nothing that I could do would hurry the creatures. I looked at my watch; it was twenty-five minutes to six, and at six o'clock the sun would vanish behind the western hills; the camera would then be useless. It was absolutely nerve-racking, literally success was so near and yet so far. But much can happen in a few minutes. The oryx, after staring at the giraffe for some time, decided that if those long-necked, keen-sighted animals could see no danger, he might as well move forward, and he came without further hesitation to the nearest water-hole. Unfortunately this was in shadow, so that I could only get the picture

of him coming down the hillside before he disappeared in the deep shade. The giraffe, seeing that no harm befell the oryx, should have advanced in a body, but for some reason only one came forward, and this I photographed as with long strides he passed along the hillside. So it was I secured my first successful film of giraffe and oryx, and I was greatly excited, little thinking what good fortune was in store for me only a few weeks hence. My companion, Harris, who also had spent the day watching and

waiting in a "blind," had better luck than I, for he had secured a beautiful piece of film showing a goodly herd of zebra drinking, and, with them, some oryx and a giraffe. We returned to camp after the sun had set, and were pleased with our first day spent at the water-holes of this wonderful desert land. From dawn to dark the day had been interesting. We had secured some reasonably good film, and we only hoped that, as the days went on, we should have better and still better luck.



## SUMMER EVE

**W**HAT courage thrills my heart this lovely hour  
 Made of so many magics, such delight !  
 I stand in mute amaze, a fortified tower  
 Ringed round with walls and barriers shining-bright  
 O linnet in the bush ! O trembling flower !  
 Ye twain have roused such legions in my soul  
 Of dreams I thought would sweet my days no more  
 Have healed me of wide sickness, made me whole,  
 Brought back my feet to Beauty's golden door.  
 And Night will come, O bird, to hush your song ;  
 To veil you, O white blossom, in her folds ;  
 But me she cannot injure that stay long  
 And marvel in the starlight of the wolds,  
 How things so slender can build up for me  
 A dwelling of such rare security.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.



“Hullo, Angela! Jim staying here, too? Do you happen to know if they have any rooms to let? I’m stranded.”

# THE WAY OF A MINX

By G. B. STERN & GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLIER

NOT often was Richard Spurnville Carew to be found doing anything so entirely conventional as applying for “board and residence” during the crowded summer months at a fairly popular seaside resort. And Gleeborough, recognising, perhaps, that he was not its type, steadily rejected him. The Grand Hotel was full; the Palace Hotel was full; so was the

Albion. They all told him that they had visitors sleeping in the billiard-room and in the bath. “What about the wine cellar?” he asked. But the manager of the Albion was not amused. He could not entertain the notion, no, not for one minute! And so reluctantly Carew began his round of the *pensions*. But here, too, he seemed superfluous. “This is the season at Gleeborough,

you know, and we are quite crowded out," was the invariable retort.

Carew began to wonder what he was doing in Gleeborough in August? But London had been dry and hot, and a friend with rather a pleasant, smooth-running Rolls-Royce had met him outside the door of Dalmorrow's, and had suggested that the Happy Meddler should jump in beside him.

"Going far?" asked Carew.

"Depends what you call far."

Carew hazarded Muswell Hill.

"Norfolk," replied his friend casually. "Gleeborough; got friends there; going to stay with them. I'll drop you outside, if you don't mind. They're not your sort."

The Happy Meddler protested that his quality was of an engaging universality, and that all men were his sort, and all women, too, and all children, dogs and butlers, not to mention colonels and Eastern monarchs.

"Quite," his friend assented, "but these are *nice* people—just nice people, a bit stiff at the beginning. They're not your sort."

The Happy Meddler shrugged his shoulders and gave in. A run in the country would be pleasant, so would a few days' sea-bathing; he remembered that there were poppies on the East Coast, and that he could lie back among them in drowsy oblivion of glaring pavements and hot asphalt. Anyway, he did not want to stay with Robertson's beastly friends. He would put up at the Grand.

After being rejected at what looked like Gleeborough's last *pension*, a really manly man, a hundred-per-cent. man, and one, moreover, who had taken to heart Stevenson's adjuration of "A bed in the bush and the stars to see . . ." would have gone rejoicing to sleep in a hedgerow. But Carew was not in a hedgerow humour. You have to be very young indeed to enjoy a bed in the bush; and bread that you dip in the river is a soggy mess, and most unhygienic at that, our sybaritic wayfarer reflected, dismissing Stevenson from his mind. The Meddler's mood was sophisticated; he pined for white napery and boiled shirts and a spring mattress. August always made him feel the burden of his late thirties. He pined, in short, for the Grand Hotel, or, failing that, even for the Pension Bella Vista, which had no vista to speak of!

Wearily he plodded along the road which led uphill a little way out of the town; and then he saw a sign-board bearing the words "Sea View. Paying Guests Taken. Ample

Accommodation. Two Minutes from the Sea." And, indeed, a sprightly gazelle might have managed it in two minutes, allowing a rough fifteen seconds for each leap.

Round a bend in the road he came upon Sea View itself, and, offering up a short prayer to the benevolent deity of all the Sea Views in England, he knocked and rang.

The door opened to him.

"You!" he cried.

And here follows a disappointment. "You" was not the girl he had loved long ago, but whose address he had unfortunately given up, instead of the slip, when he was paying his bill at the tea-rooms, so that he was never able to find her till now. No, "you" was a girl whom he had thankfully seen married to a great friend of his, Jim Strang, saying awhile, "Glad it's him and not me!" or even, if the spell of grammar were then upon him, "Glad it's he and not I!" He lost sight of them after the wedding, and had not bothered very much, believing, like so many philosophers, that a pal married is a pal lost. Besides, from their first introduction a feeling of antagonism had sprung up between himself and Angela, whom he always designated in private as "The Minx." She had demure eyelids, and golden hair, and eyes of a wistful blue, and a proud, soft little mouth. In childhood, even before she grew up, when there were four children and only three chocolate caramels to go round, Angela had always managed to acquire at least two of them. That was the sort of minx she was. Carew profoundly distrusted her.

"You!"

"Hullo, Angela! Jim staying here, too? Do you happen to know if they have any rooms to let? I'm stranded."

"I'm not sure if I have," said Angela Strang with dignity. "We are very full. You know, this is the season at Gleeborough."

The Happy Meddler collapsed on the steps.

"Since when is Jim running a boarding-house?" he inquired, when he had somewhat recovered. The last he had heard of Strang was as partner in a flourishing firm of stockbrokers.

"I did not say Jim." Angela looked enigmatic. "I am sure we really have no rooms vacant. Have you tried Bella Vista?"

"I have tried Bella Vista," said Carew, in a hollow voice. "Angela, I'm afraid if you



don't take me in I shall die on your doorstep, and that would be rather a bad thing in the season. Your boarders would fall over me as they went in and out, and an account of your cruelty might get into *The Gleeborough Gazette*."

Angela Strang did not like her "visitors" to be called "boarders"; nor did she very much like the importunate Carew. But, on the other hand, she enjoyed being in a position to grant him a favour, so she told him to come in and sit down in her office—she called it an "office," though there was nothing to distinguish it from a very bright and rosy little sitting-room, except a bottle of red ink on the desk—while she consulted her "chart." Her "chart" of the accommodation and its apportioning and dates gave the appearance of having been drawn up for a fever patient at a hundred and five degrees and in delirium. Suspicion began to dawn on Carew that the Minx was not especially competent at running a Sea View entirely on her own responsibility. He watched her gravely while she babbled of Mr. This and Mrs. That, and how their two sons and a daughter were expected the day after to-morrow, but that was all right because she could put them in Miss So-and-so's room, who said she might be staying on only if a certain colonel arrived—and—and yes, she remembered now, he had sent a telegram this morning to say he *would* arrive. . . . Well, where could she put him? Room eleven was vacant, but that had been promised to visitors who were turning up a week earlier than they had originally said, and—let me see—what a pity!—I can't put you in with Bertie Forbes. Bertie's such a dear, he would never have minded, though it's only a single room. . . . But he gave it up yesterday to Miss Delaware's father and mother, so *that* wouldn't do!

"No," said Carew firmly, "it would *not*!" He did not want, even in his present straits, to share a room with Miss Delaware's father and mother.

"I wish people would come when they say, and not earlier, and that they would go when they promise," said Angela, beginning to get hot and worried over her chart. "Now, look here"—she even appealed to the Meddler for sympathy—"look here, I'd quite forgotten. I have got the Barnabys' room marked with four crosses and Tuesday. That means that I have got four people coming on Tuesday, and I don't know which are men and which women. There's no indication, so I don't

see how I can mix them up properly in other rooms. But, anyway, I don't believe there *are* other rooms; and I can't wire them because I don't know anything more about them than these crosses. They can't have the Barnabys' room because"—very wide and convincing were the eyes of Angela—"because the Barnabys are in it, so nobody would expect me to—I mean, would they?"

"They might," said the Meddler; "you never know. What are you doing in all this mess and muddle, Angela?" he went on sternly. "Where is Jim? What is he about, to allow this?"

Angela burst into tears at last. . . . No, she did not burst into tears; that was not Angela's way. Large sparkling drops gathered in her eyes and rolled very, very slowly down her cheeks. "We have parted," she murmured—"at least, I have. Jim—didn't understand me."

"I didn't suppose he would, not for one moment," was the Meddler's perfectly truthful consolation. A wise and cynical brute like himself might have understood that the Minx needed slapping thrice daily, and denying everything that she asked for; but Jim spoilt her—naturally he would. But Angela took the remark as a tribute to the provocative mystery hidden in the hearts of some women—herself!—and, thus encouraged, she grew confidential.

Apparently Jim, after four and a half years of adoration, had ventured to tell her that she was being extravagant when she tentatively selected for purchase a fur coat for two hundred guineas instead of one for seventy-five guineas which he had earnestly recommended: "It would be good enough, wouldn't it?" "You used to say nothing was good enough for me," the Minx had retorted, in the unwise fashion of wives who begin their sentences with: "You used to say——" And then that beast Jim had dared to remark: "I ought to have put a two-hundred-guinea limit to that!"

And thus began a quarrel which had ended with Angela thrusting her hands in her pockets, tossing back her fair head, and saying that she would be a burden to him no longer, but would earn her own living. He, lazy and unbelieving, had retorted that though she might thus defiantly dig her hands into her pockets, within a few days of earning her living they would be plunged back again into his! (Even Carew thought this a little bit rude of Jim.)

"So of course I had to show him,"



Angela went on. "I mean, after that I *had* to show him, hadn't I? You can't expect me just to go on accepting his presents after that, even though he *begged* me to take the more expensive coat. I don't often get angry, you see, Dick, not often boiling red angry, but when I do, I am—awful! I mean, I quite lose control. I—I could kill people, strangle them—I could, really, Dick! I could have strangled Jim, then. I haven't got a temperament that just sulks for a few days and then can be kissed back into smiles again; I can't bear people who sulk. I'm the sort of temperament that is happy-go-lucky up to a point, and then I just—flare! I see red—and then I am—awful! I mean—I could *kill* people. . . ."

"What did you do?" interrupted the Meddler; he had had enough of Angela's temperament, and he was anxious to get a bed for the night. If she were obdurate, he must try Bella Vista again. From the look of Angela's chart, he thought his chances doubtful. Little goose! But he deemed it politic not to be wholly frank in his expressed opinion of her just at the present crisis in his affairs; for, as Angela and others had remarked, this was the season at Gleeborough, and the hotels and boarding-houses were crowded out.

Angela explained, with great delight in her own gallantry and independence, that she had walked straight out of the house and had gone to May White, a friend who had a boarding-house which she wanted to dispose of before going abroad. "And this is it," said Angela. "I paid part of the money down—"

"Where did you get it from?" The Meddler was curious; he knew that Angela had no money of her own.

"I sold my fur coat—my new one! Wasn't it a shame? Before I had even worn it!" Angela's eyes widened again with self-pity. "I do think May White might have let me have the original price for it, as it was new, and much more valuable than that, for furs are a bargain in the spring. But she wouldn't go further than a hundred and eighty, and that was pounds, not guineas!"

"A hundred and eighty pounds for a seventy-five guinea coat?" Her hearer looked puzzled.

"Oh, didn't I tell you? I took the two hundred guinea one. So I paid May that, and the rest is to come out of the profits. That was three and a half months ago.

Jim doesn't know my whereabouts, of course. And of course, Dick, you are in honour bound not to tell him, now that I have trusted you."

The Meddler nodded gloomily. He was very fond of his reticent pal, and it was a pity to think of him always being worried by Angela's scrapes. If the boarding-house were to be abandoned suddenly, just now, it would cost Jim no end of cash and bother and general readjustment. And might it not be better for Angela to drift a little further into loneliness and penitence before she returned, chastened, to her husband, or was returned to him by another's agency? Supposing that he, Jim's friend, stopped on here for a time, having nothing better to do, partly for the sake of the sailing and bathing, but mainly to keep an eye on Angela, and to see what could be done about straightening things up in this amateur, haphazard, ridiculous boarding-house of hers. She was obviously heading for the rocks; but with a strong man's hand at the helm. . . .

He rose to his feet with sudden determination. "Look here, Angela, I don't care where the Barnabys or the Colonel or that perfect darling Bertie What's-his-name are going to sleep, but here I am, and here I stay. A shakedown in the attic will do." And he added with cunning intent: "I know you can stand alone, little girl, but I feel you need someone to lean on in a crisis!"

## II.

ANGELA's boarding-house proved to be one long crisis. She explained airily that she ran it on "Bohemian lines." The Bohemian lines had a great many wiggles in them, and several lumps, and long gaps in their continuance. The Happy Meddler, who despised incompetence as much as he approved of happy-go-lucky inconsequence, constituted himself a sort of general manager at Sea View, and the Minx quite happily gave up all attempts at sedate authority. She introduced the Meddler to her "visitors"—("Visitors be hanged!" quoth the Meddler crudely. "P. G.s, and that every Saturday regular!")—as "a friend of my husband." Politely, and that was their sole attempt at politeness, they accepted this statement. Among themselves there were many fruity discussions as to the real identity of the mysterious stranger, though one thing was certain if the rest were lies—that this Mr. Carew, though he might not be a very *solid* person, was at least more

responsible than that charming butterfly child; for, strangely enough, with all her muddle and maladministration, the Minx was popular.

The Meddler, on the other hand, found himself the victim of all the unpopularity that she richly deserved, with a large dollop of his own to boot. During the years of his vagabondage he had had breakfast in strange company and in queer places, joining freely in conversation with derelicts of all sorts—with drunken cabmen and with sober cabmen, with ships' cooks and ships' captains, with two American business magnates who believed that modesty was the best policy—indeed, one of them, in his off moments, was a poet of the pre-jazz age—he had gossiped, at breakfast, with fair ladies and ladies with hair of a dark nasturtium tint, and also with Montenegrin brigands, and with English rectory children, and with a forlorn beggar-man who in the nineteenth century had been manager in a flourishing hairpin factory; he had received the confessions of a spinster at breakfast—and they were startling ones—and the secrets of an old-fashioned Nihilist, and he had coached, at breakfast, a barnstormer who was to play Hamlet for the first time that evening; but never, until now, had he come down to breakfast to be received with this sort of conversation—

“Good morning, Mr. Carew! The eggs aren't fresh *again*, and although fried mackerel is an excellent thing at the seaside, I say, and the Colonel agrees with me, that it ought to be provided for everybody or *nobody*!”

“Well, I got down first, if that's a dig at me. You don't expect me to *leave* mackerel, do you? Not I!”

“Mr. Carew, wouldn't it be possible to provide adequate breakfast for those young people who bathe before breakfast *and* for your other visitors?”

“By the way, Carew, old bean, is it O.K. about that cousin of mine who is coming down by the seven-fifteen to-night? He's a crotchety old chap, and he's got to have a south room, otherwise he won't leave me his money. You'll see to it—won't you?—or there'll be the deuce of a row.”

“Mr. Carew, do you or do you *not* think it fair to take the long mirror out of one visitor's bedroom and put it into the room of a more favoured visitor? Not to mention our waste-paper basket. What I mean is, a hotel like this ought not to show preferences.”

“There is something I should like to speak to you about *very privately* directly after breakfast, Mr. Carew. In fact, there is something I *must* speak to you about. It is *very private*.”

“As she hasn't come down to breakfast yet, I don't mind telling you, Mr. Carew, that it is quite impossible for my husband and myself to occupy the bedroom next to Mrs. Raikes, unless there is something done to thicken the wall, or the door between is blocked up. People should have their adenoids out, or else not stay in hotels to plague others.”

“Can we lunch to-day at twenty-past twelve sharp, Mr. Carew? No, only five of us; don't *dream* of making everybody lunch early for us. It's because we have planned an expedition to Carfax Castle. We can rely on you not to forget, can't we?”

“Mr. Carew, is it true that the cook is leaving? What are you going to do? You won't get another easily now, in the season, too. Take my advice, and stick to her.”

“A most extraordinary thing happened to me yesterday, Mr. Carew. I'm sure I needn't ask you to see to it that it doesn't happen again. I was actually stopped near the gates of the house, when I was walking with my friend Lady Anne Greenways, by a queer tradesman-looking person who thought I had something to do with the running of the house. He tried to force something into my hands like an overdue bill—at least, it ran on to both sides of the sheet. Really, Mr. Carew, it was most unpleasant!”

And finally “Good morning, my dear,” in encouraging chorus; “how fresh and sweet you look this morning!” as a care-free Angela came tripping down to her breakfast, wearing a new and very becoming white linen dress of expensive drawn-thread work.

The Happy Meddler's temper became very bad under the stress of these perpetual complaints. He snapped at Angela and lectured her, and sometimes threatened her; but it did not quite occur to him, nevertheless, to betray her to Jim—kind, good, worried old Jim—or else to turn his back upon Sea View and leave it to its fate and to Angela. It is always more difficult to cut loose from an equivocal position than to tumble into it. And by now, oddly enough, he felt that Sea View was his affair till the end of the season, and he could not be satisfied to leave it in the

lurch, and such a lurch as Angela had provided for it. The P.G.s were, taken as a whole, detestable, quarrelsome, exacting, unhelpful, noisy; but taken separately, one by one—and the Meddler was an individualist, and a very tender-hearted individualist at that—each was a human

The unhappy Meddler stayed on. The weather was hot, and the P.G.s more than usually trying. "*Que diable fais-je donc dans cette galère?*" he hurled in fluent but exasperated French at An-



"Pierrot had been supping with them that evening. . . . He supped with them six nights out of seven now."

being, with probably only one holiday a year, and that holiday very precious. Destiny had collected them for this holiday under Angela's roof, and Destiny had brought him here to save Angela's victims from an altogether ruined holiday. Why, then . . .

gela's fluffy golden head. To which she replied indifferently, "*Je ne say pah!*" and went out with Bertie Forster to hear a troupe of Pierrots give their evening performance on the pier. But inwardly she was very angry with the Meddler. "Piqued "



"'No, but really, Mr. Carew, her husband——'  
'How do you know,' thundered Carew, suddenly  
sick of propitiation, 'that I am not her husband?'"

is perhaps the word that describes Angela's form of anger; it had a bright little scratching point to it. How beastly of Dick to bully her when he might be,

oh, so gallant and charming, a slave within her enchanted circle! That he was shouldering her bothers for her—well, Angela was used to that from men; but that he should be doing it, not for love of her, but from some obscure and ridiculous motives of loyalty to Jim or duty to the boarding-house—obviously Dick must be plagued and punished for his folly in not yielding to sweet folly.

Angela, impetuous and Bohemian and, moreover, heady with starshine at the end of the pier, where the water lapped in

velvety blackness against the wooden supports, Angela invited all the Pierrots to return with her to Sea View for a picnic supper. She was quite sure that they were all gentlemen—nay, very romantic gentlemen—their pierrotedom merely a disguise to while away the boredom of a long summer. And, besides, mused Angela, Dick would be so cross, for it would upset entirely his catering arrangements over the week-end. Dear Dick!

"I believe in old-world hospitality," Angela defended herself, when Carew waylaid her at the pantry door, feverishly demanding her reasons for bringing home these Winsome Wonders, these Singing Superfluities.

"Old-world hospitality!" he echoed sardonically, seeing fresh reason for wrath

in the Minx's latest pose. "Yes, quite! I know exactly what you mean. The squire gave orders that the doors of the manor were to be always flung wide open, and whoever should pass, be it minstrel or monk or mendicant friar, should always be welcome to food from the groaning board. I'm sorry, Angela, that there is no boar's head in the house."

"There is," the Minx assured him coolly, "just one."

Their eyes met. Then Carew laughed. "Oh, well," he remarked, recovering his good humour, "I suppose we must feed 'em, now they are here. Thanks be to the little tin god who sent us sardines! But don't let it happen again, Angela."

"One of them," Angela argued dreamily, "is of very good family; he told me so."

"Good!" — irrepressibly from the Meddler. "I like having these noble lords about. It gives a tone to the boarding-house. Which one is it? The one with the bob or the one with the shingle?"

But Angela pursued her mystic way. "He understands me strangely. I suppose when two temperaments meet—it felt exactly as if we had met before! He told me I ought to be walking among reeds, always among reeds. That's how he sees me."

"Like a water-duck," quoth the Meddler cheerily, and went off whistling.

The Minx did not forgive him this. Her subsequent flirtation with the Pierrot who had told her she should be always walking among reeds was pursued for three reasons, perhaps four, all of them ticking loudly in the Minx's subconscious. The most deeply buried of all was defiance of Jim—who, if the truth be known, was not only her husband, but her dearly-loved husband—for daring to leave her to follow her independent way for so long, without having the acumen to find her and haul her home. On the layer above that was the fun of shocking the stuffy old boarders; and still nearer the surface, and strongest of all, was her fervent desire to upset Richard Spurnville Carew, to enrage and bother and provoke him, to elude his priggish chaperonage. *Dick*, indeed! And saying that perhaps there were four reasons, it is to leave doubtful whether or not she really found Pierrot a sufficiently romantic hero to meet the needs of her temperament.

"Soon," the Meddler prognosticated silently, "there's going to be a crisis, and a jolly old row into the bargain!"

It all depends how you pronounce "row." As it turned out, the Meddler was right. There *was* a jolly old row, against a driving wind, on a ghostly gusty night, with the surf throwing up and scudding like a pelt of hailstones along the black empty spaces of Gleeborough parade.

Pierrot had been supping with them that evening, after his second performance in the pier pavilion. He supped with them six nights out of seven now. The boarders were horrified. They discussed it in an incessant low buzz from room to room of the house. Angela had ceased to be popular. One or two of the boldest and most interfering P.G.s asked Carew if he proposed *doing* anything about it.

Carew responded, with elaborate irony, that the dungeons were being prepared, and extra strong padlocks were now in the making.

"No, but really, Mr. Carew, her husband——"

"How do you know," thundered Carew, suddenly sick of propitiation, "that *I* am not her husband?"

And that numbed Sea View for a full twenty minutes.

### III.

"It's a glorious night," mused Angela, leaving her haddock untouched, while she gazed soulfully through the window at the swaying, creaking pines in the garden.

"You are mad," said the Meddler courteously. "It's a foul night; it's going to rain presently."

The Minx took no notice of him whatever, but talked *at* him, *via* Pierrot. "It's funny, isn't it, how some people, ordinary people, think fine weather is just—well, fine weather, you know? Now, *I* think *this* is fine, when the moonlight sort of comes and goes, and the sunset was like sac-sac-sacrificial fires!"

"You've never seen sacrificial fires," grunted Carew.

"It seems to *call* to something in me"—Angela remained still oblivious of the Meddler—"something—wild! I wish I could be on the water to-night!"

"I can't make out," meditated the Meddler, "whether you are being a hypocrite or merely a goose. You would hate it on the water to-night."

Pierrot glared truculently at this appalling person lurking unexplained in the background of his Angela's life; then, likewise ignoring Carew, he said to Angela soulfully:

"Yes, I know exactly what you mean. I feel like that—all primitive; we are not really civilised, you and me. The sea, now, look at it, shining in the broken moonlight. I only wish I had my little cutter here! But I haven't had it out of harbour since Cowes."

Angela's profile, lifted to his, expressed nothing but admiration and a profound and mellow understanding. The Meddler thought of Jim Strang, and was seized by a swift and sudden resolve to "have this out." Rising, and noisily pushing back his chair: "We'll go for a bit of a spin now," he suggested. "I've hired a little wherry for the season; it's just below, in the cove. Nothing but a mainsail and a jib; bit tame for you, of course, after your cutter. But still, we'll do the best we can."

Angela looked at him doubtfully.

"Hurry up, Angela, and get a coat on," urged the Meddler, in the kindly tones of one who is granting a loved child her heart's desire.

The Pierrot said apprehensively: "Isn't it a bit blowy for a lady, what?"

"Oh, we'll have to put out every ounce of strength we know; but two strong men ought to be able to manage a tub, especially as we are both old hands at it. Angela needn't do anything but sit in the lee scuppers and listen to the mermaids combing their hair."

Again his eyes and Angela's met in a long, steady gaze, then obediently the Minx went upstairs for her coat. The Minx had many faults, but cowardice was not one of them.

Pierrot did not understand what was happening to him, nor why. He obediently sat in the spot indicated, beside Angela, and watched Carew in a deft manipulation of the sheets; and then he watched the waves that split in a white lather of fury along the bows.

"Not the weather I'd have chosen to take you for a pleasure trip," remarked the skipper, when he had got his boat running with dangerous speed before the wind. "However——" He shrugged his shoulders, and did some malicious act which caused the bows to dip slowly into the trough of a wave, and then suddenly rear and roll over sideways with a lurch. His speech was bound to be curt, for the increasing wind broke up every sentence as it fell from his salt-stiff lips, and tossed the words sportively hither and thither.

Presently a silence fell upon Pierrot, different from the stunned passivity of his

bearing hitherto—a more pregnant sort of silence, eloquent of a thousand words unspoken.

"Care to smoke?" inquired his tormentor with brutal courtesy. He made fast the sheet and lit a cigarette, then ruthlessly held the shielded flame for Pierrot. That instant of light showed him—many things! Angela, he observed thankfully, though dumb with scorn and hatred, was yet being spared the worst; she was a good sailor. A ray of moon pierced the drifting clouds and showed her huddled on the seat, a woebegone little figure, with wisps of soaked veil and hair blown flat on to her pinched white face, not a trace left of her original provocative glow. As wave after wave shattered over the wherry, Romance, afloat only for a few moments, sank slowly like a drowned body, and was seen no more in that company.

"C-c-can't we go home?" shuddered Pierrot.

Carew rather perilously reefed the sail. "Carrying too much canvas," he muttered. "I'll have to row." And he lifted out the oars. Then, suddenly sorry for Angela, he shouted in the intervals between the gusts: "Never mind, dear, I'm pulling landwards now, and not a soul need know the facts of this. If anyone asks, you've been for a spin with a tomfool skipper who didn't know dirty weather when he saw it. I expect that he, over there, can keep his mouth shut?"—with a scathing look at Pierrot, who at that moment was certainly not fulfilling these expectations.

However, because he intended to spare the romantic pair nothing, nor leave a shred of illusion for Angela to play with in her mischievous idle moments, Carew did not hurry even then, and perhaps the boat may have rocked still more than the squalling waves intended it to rock.

At last they reached dry land—dry only compared with their garments.

Pierrot, fearing that he had not been at his best during the trip, hurried homewards, and Carew escorted a silent Minx back to Sea View.

A car was standing outside the house. The drawing-room door was wide open, and standing just within was—Jim Strang, the centre of an animated group of boarders, eagerly telling him how his friend had taken his wife for a row: "You *know*, Mr. Strang—the friend who helped her to run this hotel. He *is* your friend, isn't he? At least, he *says* so. But fancy taking her out on a night like this! It really is most odd,

because——” They had apparently not had time, before the arrival of Carew and Angela, to inform Angela’s husband of the existence of Pierrot. “And, Mr. Strang, did you know that——”

At this critical moment the Happy Meddler made his sensational entrance, with Angela, into the hall, both of them drenched and dishevelled.

Jim Strang turned in the doorway and saw his wife.

It may be that the Minx was right when she described herself as primitive; at all events she hesitated not one moment, but flung herself into his arms, crying hysterically: “Take me away, Jim!”

Without another word, and with only one indignant glance at Carew, her husband picked her up, bundled her into the car, and drove off.

He left the front door open. From the corner of the road were wafted back two derisive squawks from his motor-horn; it might have been the Minx’s farewell to Carew.

Then the wind seized the front door and banged it.

The boarders at Sea View were left staring in helpless amazement at their host. “Well——” began the eldest spinster.

#### IV.

CAREW had been unspeakably glad when he first saw Jim—glad and relieved. He had had enough of acting as vigilant guardian angel to the Minx, and was ready for an outburst of warming gratitude from the Minx’s husband. It struck him that there was something wrong with the benevolent universe when he was left with only the memory of Jim’s last look, a boarding-house

full of discontented guests, and an accumulation of unpaid bills. For a couple of days he made a gallant attempt to run the boarding-house himself. He would not close it and send the guests away, for he realised, as he had realised all along, that it was for most of them their only chance of a holiday, and that they had been looking forward to it all the year, and had not the faintest chance of suddenly finding rooms elsewhere. But by the third morning his patience gave out. He took an early train up to Town, and engaged and sent down in his place an excellent but very expensive manageress, whose salary was to be defrayed from his own pocket.

The following week he heard from his friend Jim—

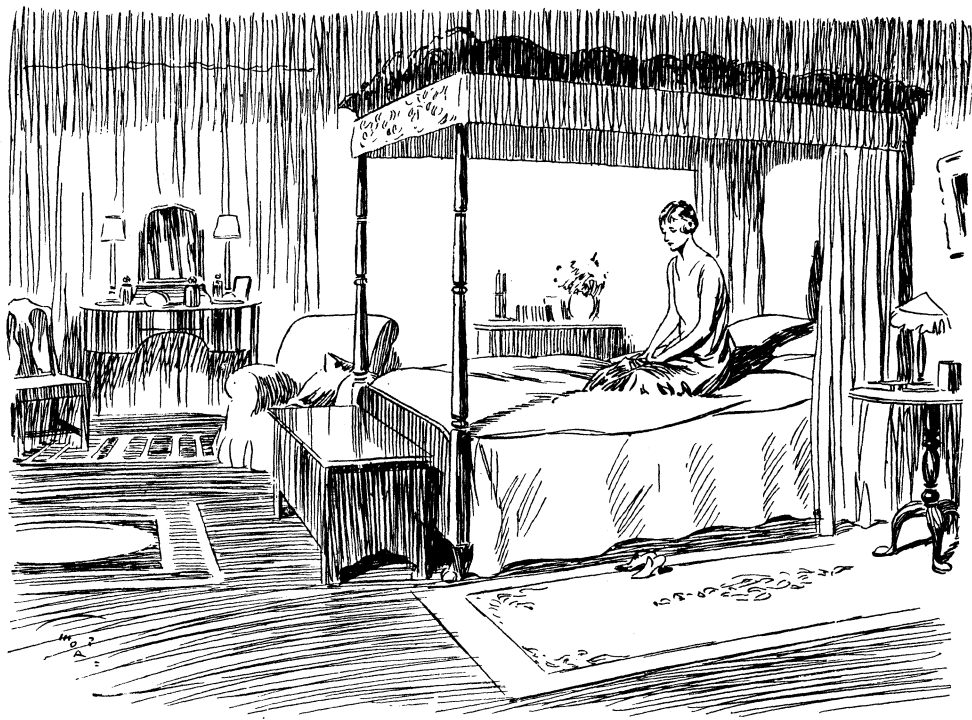
“Sorry I was curt, old man. My little Angela has been sticking up for you”—thank you, Minx!—“but it was natural that at first glance I should have thought you’d been playing the fool a bit. Anyway, you were an infernal ass to take my precious kid sailing on a night like that. She’s awfully frail and delicate. Thank goodness, I found out where she was, in time to come and look after her. She’s so sweet and sensitive that she’d been hiding for weeks, thoroughly upset over some tactless thing I’d said. It shan’t happen again—I’ll take care of that. Anyway, the boarding-house was an idiot notion of yours.

“But, as far as Angela is concerned, she says, bless her, that though you were hard hit, you *never* tried to flirt with her till that night. So let’s call it square. . . .”

And the Happy Meddler, knowing that he could say or do nothing to disturb the happiness of the reunited pair, admitted to himself, rather dazed, that the Minx had decidedly scored.

*A further episode from the career of “The Happy Meddler” will appear in the next number.*





"So," she was thinking, "I am the high-born lady who does not like to make herself cheap."  
That was a joke—an excellent joke."

# "IF AN IRRESISTIBLE FORCE . . ."

By PHILIP BURTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

AUDREY DICKSON was waiting for the 6.15 on the down platform of Hithermere Station, and the pleasure she found in the occasion raised her at the moment from the level of the merely jolly to that of definite prettiness. She was a big girl, taller than she appeared, and she always looked her best in out-door things—seemed more herself in wool and tweed than in silk and chiffon. Just now, with her cheeks flushed and rosy above the folds of a huge woolly scarf, and her brown eyes sparkling, she would have seemed, to a foreigner's mind, the type, *par excellence*, of the English girl.

She was waiting for Stephanie—Stephanie

Baratroff—and the eagerness that illuminated her face was understandable. She had been at school with Stephanie, at St. Margery's at Hythe, three years before; had, like the great majority of her friends, worshipped the exquisite little Russian with a school-girl's fervid fanaticism. There was a time when parents scattered about the country shuddered, in holiday times, with incipient boredom at the name of Stephanie; but of all the love that had been showered on her it had been Audrey's that Stephanie had most returned. They had parted sworn friends for life; had written to each other every week, every month, every now and then. . . .



Quite unexpectedly, after a six months' silence, had come, a week ago, the letter from the South of France. Stephanie had to go to London, her presence being, as she said, ridiculously required to consummate some legal business she did not understand. Her uncle, in whose villa at Nice she lived, was hardly well enough to accompany her. She had no friends in England, except her long-neglected friends of St. Margery days, and of these, of course, the first and foremost was her dear old Audrey. Was it, then, possible—she ought, she knew, to say “convenient,” but “possible” was what she meant—that Audrey could put her up for a week?

Audrey had joyfully wired that it was.

The prospect of resuming her friendship with Stephanie was not alone in accounting for Audrey's present frame of mind. It constituted, let it be said, the chief and foremost reason; but there was undoubtedly another. Stephanie Baratroff—Mlle. Baratroff, as she chose to style herself—was an exile, one of the few of her class to escape extinction at the hands of the Reds. It was her uncle who had smuggled her out of Russia—her and the family jewels. Her father, commanding a regiment at the Front, had stuck to his post till a soldiers' soviet set him before a firing-party; her mother, perhaps the luckiest of the three, had died some years before; and Stephanie, fifteen, and the possessor of a splendid, empty title, had started life afresh in an English school. The title, from the first, she had declined to use. “*Made-moiselle*,” she had said, “till Russia is Russia again.” Her uncle, whom she detested, argued against her decision in vain.

Thus, then, the other reason. Audrey, in her enthusiasm of the past, had been at no pains to emulate Stephanie's reticence. Hithermere, if it possessed a memory, must certainly remember Audrey's tales of her princess. Audrey would have been more than human had she failed to foresee the effect of Stephanie on that comfortable Surrey home of well-to-do professions and wealthy trades. The advent of a real princess—even one far less lovely than Stephanie—would, she had realised, shake this too solid Hithermere to the very core.

Five minutes later the friends were reunited. “Stephanie!” said Audrey. “How priceless to see you again!” And she added, as she held the other girl's hands in hers and ran her candid eyes over the

beautifully clothed little figure that looked like a child's beside her own: “You're ten times lovelier than I expected!”

Stephanie laughed. “And you! But what a delightful surprise for both of us!”

Audrey was laughing, too. “I hope we're not getting catty already. But me—remember how you used to call me ‘Ze great lout’? Well, I'm ashamed to say I've put on nearly a stone since then.”

As they followed the porter with Stephanie's luggage down the platform, one of the passengers, on his way to the exit, raised his cap and smiled.

“And who,” said Stephanie, when Audrey had started the engine of her car, “was the nice young man in the really beautiful plus fours?”

Audrey, with her hand on the gear lever, looked round and wrinkled her forehead interrogatively. “Oh, *that*,” she said, after a moment's thought, “that was Immovable George.” And she set herself to extricate the car from the crush of taxis that stood or manœuvred about the station entrance.

After supper Audrey and Stephanie walked in the garden that covered a couple of acres about the Dicksons' house. They wandered together down gravel paths bordered by grass that already glistened with dew in the dying light of the summer evening. Presently Stephanie stopped, disengaged her arm from Audrey's, and took the cigarette from her mouth. “I love it,” she said, looking round her at the quiet garden. “You must be very happy here, Audrey.”

“Happy?” Audrey sounded surprised. “Oh, yes, I think I always am. But I should have thought it would seem very mouldy after your place on the Riviera.”

Stephanie looked at her, and there was a momentary sadness in the dark blue eyes that in this light, and under her golden hair, looked almost black. She was thinking of her uncle's villa, contrasting its insecure magnificence with the unstudied comfort of Audrey's home. At Nice everything, even the villa itself, stood on the shifting sands of Luck. Here she had already sensed an atmosphere of peaceful permanency that made her life in France seem like a nightmare.

“Audrey,” she said, “you are not making me pretty speeches, are you? It is unlike you. Do you remember, after that term we founded the Society for the Infringement of School Rules, the ‘General Remarks’ on your report?” Her laughter suddenly

bubbled up. " 'Rude, Rough, and Disgusting' ! "

" Do I not ? " said Audrey. " And yours was worse. ' Mean, Deceitful, and Underhand ' ! All because that little worm Peronel Bellingham wouldn't own up to setting the dorm on fire. Miss Bland could lay it on thick in either direction, couldn't she ? I writhe to think of some of the things she said about us later, when we were angel prefects in the Sixth. "

They exchanged reminiscences for a time till the supply of anecdotes ran out, and they were silent.

" To-morrow, " said Stephanie, as they walked between ghostly, faint-scented rose bushes towards the house, " I must go to London. In the morning, may I, Audrey ? It is some trustee, whom I have never seen, has died. I think there are papers I must sign. "

" Of course, " said Audrey. " I'd run you up myself in the car, only Dad's so windy about my driving in London traffic. What about the ten-five train ? That would get you to Waterloo a little before eleven. Will you be back for tea ? "

Stephanie frowned. " Lunch by myself in London. I do not like your London at all. It depresses me so. Could I go earlier ? Come back for lunch ? But I do not want to be a nuisance. "

Audrey laughed. " Not a bit ! Why not the nine-ten, in that case ? You can do it easily if we have breakfast at the usual time. And—how nice for you !—you'll probably travel up with Immovable George. "

They had reached the French windows of the drawing-room as she ended, and Stephanie, halting on the step, looked back at her. " But tell me, " she said, " I insist, Audrey, who is this so mysterious George, and why and by what immovable ? You make me burn with curiosity. "

Audrey pushed her into the room. " Let's sit down, " she said, as she followed her. " Shall I bung something on the gramophone ? What about Mischa Elman—Chopin's Serenade ? That ought to provide a romantic background to the Immovable One. "

" His name, " she began, when she had set the gramophone going and seated herself on the arm of the sofa, " is George Clissold. His father, Sir Brinsley Clissold, came to live here after the War. They used to be very much better off, I believe, and they're very well connected and all that sort of thing, though I can't remember the details. I don't mean to suggest they are snobs. Not

a bit. Sir Brinsley's a dear, and the best of friends with low commercial folk like us.

" George is an architect—or just beginning to be. He was articled to a firm—if that's the right phrase—directly after the War, and everyone seems to think he has done remarkably well, considering. Of course, he started five years late, poor chap.

" Everyone's fond of George. That's what has caused the trouble. He is a nice chap in many ways ; I can't help liking him myself. But he's spoilt—you've no idea how spoilt. You see, there aren't very many young men in a place like this, these days. So many of those who did come through went out abroad. And George is rather nice-looking, and dances almost impossibly well, and plays a decent game of tennis, and—in fact, is indispensable. I suppose we all did make rather a fuss of him when he came here. And one or two girls apparently tried to flirt with him. Mrs. Costigan certainly did—she would, of course. A bit of a danger to the community. Anyway, George refused to bite, and that made one or two fools determined to *make* him bite.

" Admittedly it wasn't his fault at the start, but when a man gets the idea that every girl he meets is in love with him, he becomes insufferable, especially when the chief symptom of this hallucination is acute boredom, which he takes no pains to hide. "

Stephanie, lying full length on the sofa, studied the progress of a puff of smoke she had blown towards the ceiling. " When did this—immovable horror offend *you* ? " she asked.

Audrey laughed. " I thought you'd say that. He did—make an ass of me, I'll admit. And I *am* furious with him—why deny it ? But, Stephanie, can you imagine there was any reason ? I'm not "—she glanced down and surveyed as much of her five-feet-eleven of solid, muscular young womanhood as came below her eyes, " I'm not the right build for flirtation, am I ? And, besides, I never *have* been that sort of idiot.

" It was here, after a game of tennis. George and I had taken on Kathleen Dallas and a man of hers from Town. We'd been ragging a bit—swearing we'd wipe the floor with each other and so forth, and when George and I took the odd set at 9—7, after a fearful struggle, I could have fallen on George's neck. Mind you, I didn't do anything of the sort. I simply waved my racket at him and bellowed ' Jolly old George ! ' or something. He turned and grinned at me and then, when he caught my eye, he put on a look of frozen

boredom—put it on deliberately like a mask. He couldn't have made his thoughts more obvious if he had spoken them aloud. Kathleen, of course, was fairly doubled up. She had to turn her back and pretend to tie up a shoe. If I hear the last of it before I'm eighty, I shall be much more lucky than I expect to be."

She stretched out her arm, lifted the sound box of the gramophone, and stopped the motor. She frowned thoughtfully at her friend.

"I wish," she said at length, "that you'd teach him a lesson, Stephanie."

Stephanie sat up. "A lesson?"

"Yes. Oh, you must! I've only this minute realised how clearly it's indicated. Your coming here's a judgment on him! It's exactly what he deserves—what would do him all the good in the world—to go right off the deep end and then get firmly and brutally trodden on."

Stephanie's face was cold, and so was her voice. "My dear Audrey, you take it very much for granted that I am—what you call 'that sort of idiot,' don't you? Like you, I am not fond of making myself cheap."

Audrey jumped. "Oh, Stephanie, I didn't mean that! It was awful cheek of me, I know; but I only meant that if George—forgot his immovability, you could let him see that he'd made a fool of himself. And he will forget it, Stephanie. There may be other girls as lovely as you on the Riviera, but there aren't in Surrey."

Stephanie's smile came back. "*Kamerad!* You know I always surrender to flattery. But I think you exaggerate my sinister influence. And why should I meet this George?"

"You'll have to," said Audrey, "if we're going to dance or play tennis or anything. There simply isn't anyone else worth mentioning. I thought of asking him and Kathleen to play to-morrow evening; but we'll wash it out if you like."

Stephanie raised her eyes. She had caught the hint of disappointment in Audrey's voice. "No, don't do that," she said quickly. "I should love some tennis. It will take the taste of London out of my mouth. And I promise I will be stern with your George. If he should prove embarrassingly attentive—and, my dear old Audrey, I am perfectly certain he will not—I will tread on him, as you say. But need it be brutally, Audrey? He looks so nice."

\* \* \* \* \*

Six days had passed, and on this,

Stephanie's last night in Hithermere, Audrey was giving a little informal dance. It had to be informal, Audrey said, because a formal one meant asking all the people one didn't want. Her father—whose permission, Stephanie noted with amusement, was asked informally when all the preparations had been made—resigned himself with groans to the inevitable. He was, he said, prepared to provide an informal bottle or two of wine in exchange for leave to lock himself in his study.

It was after midnight. George and Stephanie, at the end of a fox-trot, made for the coolness of the garden. At the French windows they came upon Audrey, who sat on a cushion, talking cars to Peter Dallas. She broke off a heated discussion of the merits of two rival makes, wriggled good-naturedly to one side, looked up, and whispered a word or two to Stephanie as she passed. George, as he hurried down the path in pursuit of his partner, heard the argument break out again behind him. "Four-wheel brakes! My dear old Peter, it doesn't go fast enough to need 'em on more than one. Look here, I'll bet you a dozen tennis balls to a packet of gaspers—"

Stephanie stopped and turned as she heard his step. In the faint light of a moon just risen, and hidden as yet behind the firs, she looked, in her filmy dress, a fragile creature, exquisite, scarcely earthly. He thought of her as he had seen her that afternoon in the sunlight on the tennis lawn. Then her lightness and grace and speed of movement had suggested, not so much Ariel as Carpentier. There had been, as disastrous singles had taught him during the week that was past, no little solid bone and muscle behind her volleys. Now she looked as if the breeze that was stirring the laurels might gather her up like gossamer, and escape with her. Her eyes, he thought—he smothered the thought and mentally shook himself. He said, in a voice that was pleasantly matter-of-fact: "There's a seat down here at the end of the lawn."

They had missed one dance, and now another, a waltz, had begun. From the garden seat at the end of the lawn they could hear the saxophones crooning a tune whose sentimentality the mingled magics of summer night and Youth and a very little champagne had changed, for George at least, to purest pathos. The sweet night scent of a tobacco plant drifted heavily on the air, and Stephanie's face, that he

saw in profile, was a living essence distilled from the unseen loveliness of flowers that nodded everywhere in the darkness.

The situation was one that a susceptible young man would have recognised as trying, even dangerous. George thought of it as being more than these. For Immovable George, unknown to callous and ribald Hithermere, was a very much more than ordinarily susceptible young man.

From an early age—ever since, in fact, he had emerged from the safe girl-scorning school-boy period—George had been as wax in woman's hands. There was, be it said, no vice in George. Only, indeed, an almost supernatural innocence could have landed him in the scrape from which the War so luckily extricated him during his very first year at Oxford. Had that innocence been less proof against the sophisticating influence of a soldier's life, he would not have suffered himself to become so sadly entangled during an eight days' leave from the Somme, or have finally floundered, within three months of demobilisation, into the net of a very astute little lady in revue.

It was after the latter episode, whose settlement decided, once and for all, the question of selling the overburdened Clissold estate, that George's father had made a definite stand.

"My dear old chap," Sir Brinsley had said, after George's abject apology had trailed to an end, "it's no good thinking about that. From what one can see of the future, it seems quite clear that we'd have to go in any case. It's the future, moreover, I want to discuss. I don't mean to talk any good old-fashioned rot about washing my hands of you, but I must point out that next time you want a cool eight hundred to pull you out of a hole, there simply won't be that much available." Here he had paused and cocked a humorous eye on his son. "Try to look at the situation from a common-sense angle. Suppose you were walking down Great Portland Street and saw a particularly tempting Rolls in a shopman's window. You'd hesitate, eh, before you burst inside and told them to book it up to me? Just so. Well, next time a vision of feminine loveliness smites your sensibilities, shut your eyes and murmur: 'No, the governor can't afford it.' Dash it, George, you're twenty-four—"

"I know," said his son unhappily, "and I behave like seventeen. I can't understand

it myself in my saner moments. I think it's a sort of mental kink. It's awfully hard to explain. But every now and then, when I'm being discretion itself, and feeling as platonic as possible, I catch a girl's eye—a particular sort of look—no, I can't explain—but, anyway, I find myself saying just about every bally thing I'd rather perish than utter the morning after."

Sir Brinsley laughed. "Sounds mental, certainly. And, like most forms of mental trouble, it's hereditary. Adam succumbed to just that particular sort of look when Eve held out the apple. But, nevertheless, you've got to ride yourself on the curb. If, as you say, the morning after brings sanity, it shouldn't be difficult. When you meet that soul-destroying look, stiffen your upper lip and wait till the morrow. Can you do it, d'you think? Not nearly always, but every time?"

George had taken the slow, deep breath of resolution. "I will, sir," he had said, "I give you my promise."

Life since then had been devoid of crises, though not of pitfalls. The latter, indeed, had seemed to multiply about his cautious feet, and George, too modest to jump to what might have seemed the obvious conclusion, had wondered why. Then he had overheard his nickname, and guessed the truth. People were trying to pull his leg. Well, he would see to it that they didn't succeed.

Once he had known the conspiracy for what it was, things had been easier. He had begun to think his promise safe of fulfilment—till Stephanie came. From the moment he first set eyes on her he had known that it had never, as yet, been really put to the test.

Stephanie, sitting close beside him in the warm darkness of the garden, had been speaking of her departure. George hunched his shoulders and looked at his feet.

"It's been," he said, "a wonderful week. For me, I mean—and Audrey, and Hithermere generally. Whenever we start to reminisce, someone'll say: 'Remember that priceless week?' We shall never forget you—Princess."

Stephanie's head went up. "I think," she said, "we arranged, merely because of your really barbarous pronunciation of the words 'Mademoiselle' and 'Baratroff,' that you should call me Stephanie. I hate"—she smiled faintly—"people who break arrangements."

George raised one hand from his knee in

a gesture of resigned despair. "I'm sorry. I knew I was running into touch. You mustn't be really angry with me—Stephanie, because I had to say it, once."

little boy in this country is, as it were, brought up on a diet of princesses? He is, believe me. From the tenderest age he learns, on the authority of the printed word, that the



"'I suppose,' she said gently, 'you never went in for—pigs?' George was gripping his knees with a force that hurt."

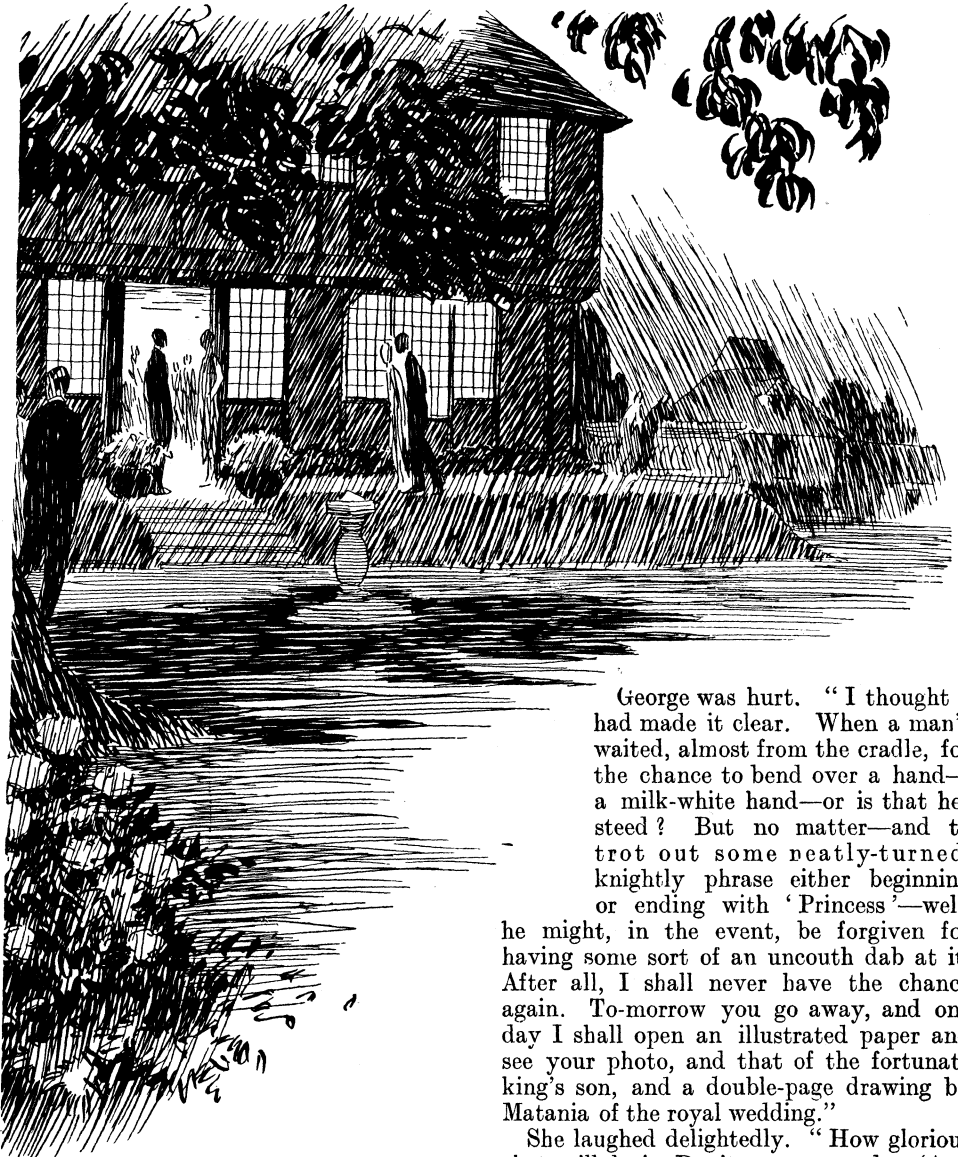
She gave an incredulous little laugh. "You had to? Why on earth?"

George straightened his shoulders. "I should have thought it was obvious," he said. "Didn't you know that every nice

goal of every venture is a princess. Before I was seven years old I was a connoisseur in princesses. I should have known her at once, had my hopes of meeting one come true. Princesses, you see, have certain

definite characteristics by which they may be known. They are always very beautiful, with golden hair. 'The colour of spun gold' was the phrase my text-books used; but

her voice, broke in: "I'm not a stranger to Grimm and Hans Andersen, George. But I continue to grope in all this fearful nonsense for the smallest excuse."



George was hurt. "I thought I had made it clear. When a man's waited, almost from the cradle, for the chance to bend over a hand—a milk-white hand—or is that her steed? But no matter—and to trot out some neatly-turned, knightly phrase either beginning or ending with 'Princess'—well, he might, in the event, be forgiven for having some sort of an uncouth dab at it. After all, I shall never have the chance again. To-morrow you go away, and one day I shall open an illustrated paper and see your photo, and that of the fortunate king's son, and a double-page drawing by Matania of the royal wedding."

She laughed delightedly. "How glorious that will be! Don't you remember 'And they feasted seven days and seven nights'? Sometimes more, but seven at least. I am so fond of food. But I think your boasted knowledge is at fault. Whoever heard of a princess marrying a king's son? She would never dare to fly in the face of tradition like that. In the best royal families it was customary for the princess to marry either a swineherd or else the youngest

now, of course, with the gold-spinning industry almost at a standstill— Their eyes are blue—often an ordinary palish blue, like other people's. But that, I always considered, denotes an inferior sort—Teutonic, don't you think?—whereas a wonderful, deep—"

Stephanie, with a hint of shakiness in

son—usually of a wood-cutter. Surely you remember that aged wood-cutter, who died always at the very beginning? He used to call his sons to his bedside and say——”

“‘My sons, now that I am about to die——’ I remember him perfectly. But I believe you’re better up in this branch of history than I am.”

Stephanie smiled. “Why not? There was a time when, in my country, every nice little girl was brought up on a diet of swineherds and wood-cutters’ youngest sons. I suppose that all of us dream about something we feel the Fates are denying us. So foolish of us, don’t you think? The boy’s princess is perhaps an empty-headed, sophisticated little fool who has frittered away her emotions as well as her half a kingdom at the tables. And the fine, strong, silent swineherd probably never has a thought beyond his swine and the—what do you call it?—Football League?”

“So you dream, too,” said George beneath his breath.

“Did I admit it?” Stephanie looked away. “Perhaps I do. Yes, it is true I have one dream. I will tell you, if you like. It is a cottage I dream about. No, you mustn’t laugh—a real cottage. It is in—but I will keep the name to myself. There is only one utterly unspoilt village on the Côte d’Azur, and if the name were known—— The cottage belongs to the curé—an old, old man of whom I am very fond. In a little while now he is going back to the North, where he was born. He wants to die there. And when he goes he sells me the cottage. He would give it me, the saint that he is, but I have insisted. Every time I win at the tables I put aside a certain amount, and, however badly things may go, I never break into my cottage money.”

George cleared his throat. “I suppose,” he suggested, “you’ll use the place as a sort of quiet retreat for week-ends?”

Stephanie turned on him, her eyes wide with reproach. “But no! What a profanation! I shall live there, of course—with a swineherd or a wood-cutter’s son, as the Fates may ordain. Oh, I have thought of everything—even the nice, coarse peasant dresses I shall wear while I work all day in the house. I tell you, I can shut my eyes and see the very way the furniture is arranged, and the brass and pewter things I shall keep so brightly polished. On summer evenings such as this has been we shall sit in the garden, my man and I—you guessed there was a

little garden, with bees?—and while I knit (I must certainly learn to knit) he will tell me how many swine he has herded during the day, or how many pieces of wood he has cut. And sometimes, when the pigs or the logs bring in more money than usual, we shall dress ourselves up, for a joke, like people of quality, and go to—to the town that is not far off—and watch the cars, and note the fashions, and walk by the sleek, blue, well-behaved sea, and lastly join the dancers in the Casino. And we shall laugh at the poor, bored creatures who dance there every day and find life tiresome because they have never lived.”

There was a pause.

“Swineherds,” said George, “were always lucky, weren’t they? And wood-cutters’ sons. Has—has this particular one presented himself yet to his princess?”

She shook her head. “No, not yet. I wait and wait, but there seem to be very few of them nowadays. You don’t, by any chance, know of one—George?”

He was looking straight in front of him. “I’m afraid I don’t,” he said.

For a time the only sound was the music that came to them from the house behind.

Stephanie leant a little towards him. “I suppose,” she said gently, “you never went in for—pigs?”

George was gripping his knees with a force that hurt. “No,” he muttered. “Thought of it once. Fella told me—rotten bad game for beginners.”

Stephanie watched his face. It had set in cold, implacable lines. She remembered Audrey’s words—something about a mask. Immovable George! She turned her head, then looked at his face again. The faint reflection of light on his forehead might, or might not, have been caused by beads of perspiration. She spoke once more, and her voice was little more than a whisper or less than a caress.

“It’s no good hoping your father——”

George moved convulsively. “Ineligible,” he said. “My grandfather, the hoary old reprobate, sold every stick of timber on the place before he died. Dad, in a country that thinks in terms of cash, doesn’t even cut very much ice.”

As George and Stephanie reached the house, and he stopped to let her pass ahead of him, she laid her hand for a moment on his shoulder. “George,” she said lightly, “your pose—is superb.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Later that morning—for the dance, after

stopping punctually at one, when the car arrived for the band, had been carried on informally, to the gramophone, till half-past two—there were three of the dancers whose thoughts kept sleep for a time at bay.

George sat on the side of his bed. Ten minutes ago he had entered the bedroom with the purposeful air of one who means to brook no delays. He had pulled off his coat, flung it across a chair; then he had stood quite still, looking about him in a vague, bewildered way, had reached to the mantelpiece for a pipe, put it, unlit, in his mouth, and subsided on to the bed. Since then he had not moved.

At least, he was thinking, he had not failed. But even that fact afforded him no comfort. He would have failed all right, he told himself, if he hadn't overheard what Audrey'd said. "Last chance, Stephanie!" He had known what that meant. Stephanie had been told about him—Immovable George, the standing joke of the neighbourhood. Audrey had put her on to bait him—to draw him as a terrier draws a badger. He had tumbled to it at once, only he hadn't thought that Stephanie would have cut into a game like that.

Lucky, he thought, that he had overheard, otherwise he would now be in a fool's paradise indeed. Or had the badger's usual fate been intended for him—first drawn, then butchered? Not that it mattered much. It was a waste of time to worry about what a girl like Stephanie meant, or thought, or said.

George took the pipe from his mouth and stared at the wall in front of him. Well, that was that. Over. For good. There would be no morning-after avowal of what he had managed to keep behind his teeth the night before. She was going away. As well she was. Even now, in spite of everything, he would make a fool of himself if he saw her again. He would never see her again. And a good thing, too. He would never listen again to her voice, with its faint, seductive trace of alien intonation. He was very glad he would not. Of course he was glad.

He buried his face in his hands.

A mile away, in the Dicksons' house, Stephanie also sat on her bed, not on the

side of it, but in the middle, curled up like a cat, with her legs tucked underneath her. She, too, was gazing fixedly at a bedroom wall, but her face, set in a hardness that George's lacked, looked, at the moment, immeasurably older.

"So," she was thinking, "I am the high-born lady who does not like to make herself cheap." That was a joke—an excellent joke. Cheap! She had made a gift of herself—and been refused. She—to throw herself at the feet of this lumpish, dull, cold-blooded, conceited fool of an Englishman, and be kicked away, like a dog that fawned importunately! How she hated herself—and him, of course, him even more.

Time was when she could have summoned her servants and had him whipped—tied up and whipped! But no—he was noble; one could not do that. And the fault had been hers.

What did it matter, in any case? In unheroic days like these one—ran away back to France and forgot. They would never meet again, and it would be easy to forget—of course, so easy.

A tear rolled, slowly at first, down the side of her nose, ran, like a coward, from the taste of powder, and dropped, with a sound that was not to be denied, on the eiderdown.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Audrey's bedroom the light was out, but for once her thoughts were keeping her awake. "I wish," she said to herself, "I hadn't done it. Rotten joke, at the best. All very well for Stephanie to say she *hadn't* flattened him. Too sporting to sneak, as she always was. But anyone who as much as glanced at the poor boy's face . . . I didn't realise he'd take it as hard as that. Dirty work, Audrey, spiteful, mean! . . . But it's not as though they're likely to meet again. That's a good thing—a jolly good thing!"

Comforted by the thought of their permanent separation, she hovered deliciously on the brink of sleep. Then she started violently and opened her eyes. "Good Heavens!" she whispered aloud. "I never thought of that! Stephanie's got to catch the nine-ten. They'll run slap into each other on the platform!"





# THE SPRING OF THE YEAR

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

IT was on a morning of the second week in April when George Carvey was released from the county gaol, with some helpful advice, two tracts, and a slender store of coppers and small silver to help him start life anew. He had been "put away" for six weeks with hard labour for a fruitless attempt to steal a bicycle.

Had he actually succeeded in stealing the machine, his previous record would have earned him a much heavier sentence. This record was not a nice one, and it had been no pleasant sensation to stand powerless in the dock and hear the inspector of police run through it with almost a pre-Raphaelite devotion to detail. But the merciful law of England does not entirely take the will for the deed. Somewhere in the minds of every judge and magistrate there must be a table—like the weights and measures we had to learn as children—beginning: Two attempted murders make one completed burglary. Thus George of the murky past escaped with six weeks.

But it seemed longer. Indeed, it was surprising to note the changes which had overtaken Mother Earth in that comparatively short space of time. February, whose other name is Fill-Dyke, was scattering rain and depression over the land when George bade *au revoir* to the outside world. The trees were bare and scarcely a green bud was showing in the hedgerows. But on the morning of his release the sun was June warm, the flower-beds in front of the county hospital—a short distance down the road—were a blaze of colours, and the trees visible among the vistas of bricks and mortar were already clad in varying shades of green.

It may be thought that a man in George Carvey's case would take small count of these things, and maybe at first he was only subconsciously aware of them. But it is obviously more cheering to come out of

prison on a fine warm day than on a cold wet one, and the man went out to face the world, whistling cheerfully, if somewhat out of tune, with a heart as light as a blown flake of thistledown.

He did not know at first that the spring was in his blood, that Proserpine, herself lately released from a gloomier prison, had taken him by the hand and was dancing beside him along the pavement now powdered with the first dust of the year. His thoughts were centred upon his desires, and they were purely material, and could be summed up in the two words—beer and tobacco.

He bought an ounce of shag at the first shop he came to, where newspapers and sweets were also to be had. The apple-cheeked woman who served him had also a smile for him, not knowing whence he came, and remarked that it was quite like summer. George lit his clay pipe and puffed luxuriously as he turned away from the door. Never before had tobacco tasted so good. It was really worth while to be alive.

Owing to a motherly legislation, beer was unobtainable before ten o'clock, and by that time George Carvey had shaken from his feet the dust of the county town and was two miles distant, walking on the edge of a steam-tarred road, between hedges which showed green under their coats of dust. But at five minutes past ten he came upon an inn with a trough in front, a swinging sign, and a delightful aroma of horses mingled with stale swipes. He went in, ordered a pint, and drank it out of a glass tankard. His face lit up and his eyes kindled as the brown liquid slowly vanished. It was nectar to him after his six weeks' drought. Beer and 'baccy! What more could the heart desire?

George Carvey was undoubtedly a thief, but greed and ambition had had nothing to do with his downfall. He asked nothing

much of life, only sufficient rough food, something to smoke, and a pint or two of beer a day. What powers of reasoning lay concealed in his thick head told him that these wants were not unreasonable. Perhaps he was wrong; but it is not the intention of his historian to be caught moralising.

He had only a vague idea of whither he was going. In a general sort of way he intended to look for work. If he failed to

distant, but it was not his intention to return to it. There was no room in that fold for the black sheep.

George's downfall was due to three early mistakes, for he had been caught poaching just that number of times. On the third occasion the chairman of the bench imposed a fine considerably beyond the prisoner's means, so that George was given his first view of the inside of a prison. When he



"'Are you on the road?' 'Sort of,' said George, and added quickly: 'Looking for work.' . . . 'I suppose you don't know of nothing doing, miss?' 'I don't—really I don't—around here.'"

find any, he would as likely as not be back in prison within a week.

From his appearance he might have been any age between twenty-five and forty. He wore a thatch of close-cropped, dark brown hair as thick as the texture of a carpet. He had light, kindly hazel eyes, a fresh complexion, a tight-lipped mouth and a narrow dented chin. He came of a decent, hard-working family which lived not so far

came out, his parents conspired with his brothers and sisters to make home life impossible for him. They had the passion of their kind for being considered respectable, and George had let them down. Besides, nobody in the neighbourhood would employ the prodigal. So, like the youngest son in the fairy tale, George set forth upon his travels.

The man was a moral weakling with a

crooked streak in him. He worked when he could find work to do, but when neither work nor money came his way, he stole. He stole to obtain food, he stole to obtain a glass of beer and a pipe of shag, arguing in his thick head that Life owed him a bare existence and just a little—a very little—enjoyment.

All this is very regrettable, but with your leave I shall show you another picture of the man—George Carvey repentant, or, if not repentant, at least conscious of the wisdom of the most immoral proverb that honesty is the best policy. Whatever the motive working in that cloudy mind, whether it sprang from grace or whether the prison system had succeeded for once in teaching a man that it does not pay to be wicked, it is pleasant to think that George Carvey made on that perfect April day a resolution to run straight.

He bought at the inn, along with his first pint of beer, a supply of bread and cheese, lest hunger should overtake him at some inconvenient stage of his journey. With this parcel bulging one of his pockets, he tramped on, and called at other inns along the road, where he made tentative inquiries about any work which might be had in the district. He might just as well have asked for diamonds, but he was not discouraged; and it was while he was eating his lunch beside a stream a few yards from the high-road that he began to make those resolutions which most men reserve for the first of January.

The stream glistened like molten silver and chattered like a child. An old water vole, swimming from bank to bank, ducked his whiskered head at the sight of George and vanished. A breeze bearing along with it the grassy odour of dry meadows shook the willow leaves along the stream side, turning them from pale to bright. A bridge of one high arch spanned the stream, and cars which came humming along the road rose at the incline with the ease and grace of horses at a fence. Above the clamour of other birds, clearly and sweetly in the distance, George Carvey heard the cuckoo for the first time that year.

Who shall write in the language of another's thought, or say why George the unimaginative was touched and uplifted and made dissatisfied with the sneak-thief which was himself? Perhaps it seemed to him that the world was so good to live in that it were a pity to waste any of one's life in prison. Perhaps it occurred to him that he,

George Carvey, was made for better things. Perhaps conscience reawakened and spoke to him, not accusingly, but gently and friendly-wise.

So he made his resolutions as you and I make them in bed on New Year's morning, forgetting that the first one was to get up early and not waste time in dozing and thinking. He would find work—somehow. But find it or not, he would live honest. He would tighten his belt in the days of penury, and cast out the unclean spirit which was always whispering to him that a man had a right to a full stomach, a pint of beer, and a pinch of shag. Only let him find regular work, and he would live without reproach, save money, and even perhaps in time return to his native village and be respected like all the other members of his family.

Now, contrary to its present appearance, this is not the sort of story which choir boys are given to read, to uphold them in the first hour of temptation when wicked men shall urge them to risk a shilling on the Derby. I only wish it were. But I think the Recording Angel who attends to the credit side of our accounts shed a tear on that page of George Carvey's pass-book and so smudged the figures as to wipe out the overdraft and give him a presentable balance in hand. Whether he kept it or lost it depends upon the mathematics of that other Recording Angel who has, on the whole, a far busier time.

Let us now ring down the curtain on George and lift it again at four in the afternoon, when he stood outside an isolated cottage just beyond the outskirts of a small village. He was hungry and thirsty now, and unwilling to disburse any of his slender store of money. What harm to knock at that cottage door and ask for a drink of water, when perhaps someone should be moved to give him a crust of bread along with it?

The cottage had a prosperous appearance. There was a long garden in front, scrupulously kept by professional hands. Behind was a much larger garden, perhaps two acres in extent, stocked with vegetables and fruit trees, with three men working in it. It was as prosperous a little market-gardener's establishment as one could wish to see.

He rapped at the door with his knuckles, and a girl in a clean cotton dress opened it upon him and looked at him inquiringly. She was small and dark and rather pretty, with friendly little dark brown eyes and an

indescribable air of gentleness. Yet there was nothing striking about her, which makes it all the harder to account for the effect of her appearance on George Carvey. He stared at her as at an apparition, and when he blurted out his request for a glass of water he heard himself stammering.

She withdrew without a word and returned a minute later with a large cup of tea and two thick slices of bread-and-butter and a crude-looking home-made cake balanced in the saucer. George was overwhelmed, and touched his cap. "Thank you, miss," was all he said, but his eyes were two beacons of gratitude.

"The kettle was just on the boil," she said, as if that explained everything. "Are you on the road?"

"Sort of," said George, and added quickly: "Looking for work."

The girl nodded comprehendingly.

"I suppose you don't know of nothing doing, miss?"

"I don't—really I don't—around here."

George made a polite effort to swallow his scalding tea.

"I'll eat the bit of grub round the corner, miss," he said, "and thank you kindly. I dessay you don't want me to be seen standin' around here."

"You needn't hurry," she responded. "I'd ask you in, only father——"

She left the sentence unfinished, but George understood. These were respectable folks like his own people. Meanwhile he devoured her with his eyes. Yes, undoubtedly the spring of the year was in his blood. She, with her small pretensions to good looks, common and commonplace little person, was all that was lovely and desirable in his eyes. He thought her shoulder the ideal resting-place for a tired head. Surely there was coolness and healing in the two brown work-worn little hands. Gratitude had touched him first, and then he saw in her a beauty made only for his eyes to see completely.

He may not have realised that this was love. He was a man of instincts rather than of shapen thoughts. He only knew that a strange hunger possessed him, more poignant than all his previous needs of meat and drink. For a few minutes he stood there, talking disjointedly while he nibbled and sipped; then he handed back the cup with what grateful thanks he could muster and shambled off down the road. He carried her likeness in his memory as securely as if he had her portrait in a locket

around his neck. He had left part of himself behind—or so he felt—and he was achingly aware that only a miracle could bring him back to look for it.

## II.

AT the far end of the village was a little gabled house called Willowbank, which stood with its back to the north and its flank to the road. An old wall hid its front garden from the vulgar gaze and protected it from all but the gentle winds blowing from the south and west. An aged bachelor named Culling lived at Willowbank. He had once practised as a barrister, but had long since retired. He had only two interests in life—his money and his garden. The hamlet boasted that he was the meanest man in the world, but this may not have been strictly true. Village people always use superlatives when they boast, and the ignorant of the neighbourhood knew no better than to refer to him as Creeping Judas.

The high gate of Willowbank was wide open as George Carvey stumped past, affording him a view of Creeping Judas, white-bearded, shirt-sleeved, perched on a ladder, clipping at a tree which threatened to blind one of the bedroom windows. It was a very beautiful tree, now showing great lily-like flowers, white and tinged with purple. George had never seen one like it before, and paused to stare at it. Mr. Culling glanced down and saw him, and addressed him pleasantly. He was pleasant to everybody who required no more of him than fair speech.

"Know what this is?" asked Culling, obviously referring to the tree.

George shook his head.

"Ah, you don't see many of 'em about. It's a magnolia tree that I planted under the wall and trained to it. A Chinese tree, you know. Very few of 'em will grow, but this one's sheltered from the north and east by the two walls. Just look down here."

He pointed down. The stem and lower branches were all inextricably twisted in a permanent tangle, and looked like a bunch of snakes or coils of hair irregularly plaited.

"It wouldn't grow straight," said Mr. Culling, and added pleasantly: "There's a lot of people in the world like that."

George, who had spent the previous night in prison, grinned feebly at the jest. "P'raps this 'ere mangolia never 'ad the chance, sir," he hazarded.

"Ah, you mean because it's trained to the

wall? You know something about gardening, then?"

"A bit, sir."

"A stranger here, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir. Looking for work."

"Looking for money, you mean. There's plenty of work to be had, but you fellows don't want that. Oh, no! It's more money and less work with you all the time. Do you think I can get a gardener? No, I can't. Not one. And there are great loutish fellows in this village living on the dole."

It was quite true. Mr. Culling could not get a gardener, owing to his conception of a fair wage being fifty per cent. less than most other people's. Slowly and painfully he descended the ladder and beckoned George over to him.

"You say you want a job. Got any references?"

George shook his head.

"Well," said the old gentleman, whose seemed quite pleased, "you can't expect high wages without references, can you? You may have been in prison, for anything I know. But I'll risk that

and take you on as my gardener for sixteen shillings a week."



"In the dusk of almost any evening you might have seen George and May pacing with slow desultory steps the length of Goldmeadow Lane, and taken them for a pair of declared lovers."

George shook his head. "I couldn't live on that, sir."

"What? Not live on it! Why, when I was a boy, farm-labourers were bringing up healthy, happy families on eleven shillings a week. Kept their own pigs and their own chickens and saved money on it. You fellows are all alike. It isn't work you want."

"Wouldn't pay for food and lodgings,

those few shillings a week. And, moreover, if he accepted the situation he would be living and working within ten minutes' walk of the girl who had stirred him so strangely. So in the end he took the job.

He began work next morning, and found that he had taken no sinecure, although his employer toiled side by side with him. It was a large garden, and there was more than enough to do. Old Culling was growing



feeble and ailing, and, as his garden came a close second to his

passion for money, it was likely that he would have been compelled soon to

employ a man at a reasonable wage, but for George's fortuitous arrival.

George Carvey was no great gardener, but he was strong and willing, and his employer was always at hand to direct and criticise. On the whole, he earned the pint of beer and the two or three pipes of tobacco which he also allowed himself every evening. For nearly a week he tried to make up his mind to step up to the cottage beyond the other end of the village and see the girl who had helped him on his way, just to tell her that he had found work—no more than that. It was a queer diffidence, almost a schoolboy shyness, which kept him away. And then, at the end of the sixth day, he met her face to face in the village street.

not that wouldn't, sir," said George doggedly.

"But you wouldn't have to pay for lodgings. There's a loft over my coach-house at the back where you can sleep. And as for food, I've got some potatoes I'd let you have cheap."

It was a disgraceful offer, and George knew it. But in his new rôle of a reformed character any work was better than none and any wage better than none. Single as he was, he could just manage to exist on

She knew him at once, seemed surprised and not ill-pleased to see him, and they stopped and talked. He told her of his good fortune, and she seemed almost to pity him. Creeping Judas had a reputation in his own country.

"Well, miss," said George, grinning, "the wages isn't much, but they're something to rub along with until I can find summat better."

He told her his name, and she told him that hers was May Voyce. Her father was a market gardener and doing well. She might have added that he enjoyed a reputation as a skinflint only second to Mr. Culling's.

Old Voyce was actually a worshipper of the great god Respectability. It was in the service of this god, and no other, that he went to chapel every Sunday, looking like a large black cockroach. He worked hard all the week and had no amusements. Nobody had any just reason to complain that he had done him an ill turn, and nobody had the least occasion to thank him for anything. He paid his men good wages because he was too long-headed to risk hiring inferior labour or lose the services of a useful man. He was about as hard and dull and passionless as a bar of cast-iron. These things George learned of him in due time.

May was the second of his two children. The elder was a young man who worked in a grocer's shop in the neighbouring town of Thurlbury, and played left-half for the Thurlbury Early Closers. This, too, George was to learn later, or, if he heard it then, it was driven out of his head by the sheer wonder of the fact of her allowing him to walk with her a little way.

Their courtship may fairly be stated to have begun then and there. It continued through the spring and the early summer. George worked hard in the garden all day and walked out with May in the evenings. They met secretly at a little distance from the village, lest Voyce should see them together or come to hear of their evening walks. Soon all the village knew, but old Voyce was so unpopular that even the most mischievous tongues declined to wag in his hearing.

In the dusk of almost any evening you might have seen George and May pacing with slow desultory steps the length of Goldmeadow Lane, and taken them for a pair of declared lovers. This they were not, for the poorer classes are often more circumspect and less impetuous in their courtships than

their betters. George could not afford to marry; old Voyce would do all in his power to stop his daughter from marrying a jobbing gardener who had entered the village as a tramp. Moreover George's newly-developed conscience made him painfully aware that he would have to make a long and detailed confession to May before there was any talk of marriage, and she was so strait-laced a little person that he was glad to defer the ordeal.

Indeed, George was very happy in the present, and the future, since it was beyond his control, was almost beyond his thoughts. He was supremely conscious of his newly-won virtue. If May knew what he had been, he wondered if she would ever speak to him again. Yet she must know some day. His present honesty was such a novelty to him that he was not above praising it by inference.

"It's a good job I'm a straight sort of chap," he would tell May, "although the boss don't seem to be quite sure o' me. I know where he keeps 'is money. I came in once to see 'im, and the drawer was open. Quids and quids there was in notes. And now, when he sends for me to come into the study, 'e looks first at me, and then at that drawer, as sly as sly. Why, if I wasn't a straight chap through and through, I could 'ave that old drawer open with a penknife in two twos."

There was a comical side to his pride in his moral rectitude. He loved to compare himself to the twisted old magnolia. He would apostrophise it when he passed it in the garden.

"Here's you and here's me, and both of us with a bit of a twist in us. And you've got to stay crooked, because you're a tree, but I've got myself straight again, because I'm a man, I am."

So George passed half the spring and half the summer in the service of Mr. Culling, alias Creeping Judas the miser, trying to earn himself a "character" which might in time obtain for him more remunerative employment. He would have achieved this without doubt but for Charlie Voyce, brother to May.

### III.

HE met the girl as usual on a July evening, when Goldmeadow Lane was luminous with the glow of a red sunset. She had been crying, but the tears were now dry; only their traces lingered in little inflammations under her eyes. Her face was white and set,



the little lines in it stamped deeper, and her smile, when she greeted him, was a piece of indifferent acting.

"What's the matter?" he asked her bluntly, as soon as her arm was tucked in his and their faces turned towards the red glow in the sky.

"Nothing."

"Nothing won't do for me," said George slowly and heavily. "Summat's fretting you, and I'll go on asking till you tell me what 'tis."

"Don't ask, then, George. You'll never want to walk out with me no more."

"Who you bin murderin', then?" he demanded, with heavy irony.

"I don't want to think about it," she whispered, with a sudden little squeak in her voice. It was just like the voice of a child about to cry. "You'll know it all soon enough. Everybody will."

"I'd like to know first," he said doggedly.

She clutched his arm convulsively. "It's my brother Charlie," she said, with a gasp.

"What's he been doin' to you?" George demanded, with the air of one scenting battle.

Again the clutch on his arm tightened. "He's back at home now. He's—he's—oh, I don't know how to tell you—he's been stealing money!"

George's attempt to look shocked might have been a failure had it not been for his genuine sympathy.

"He's trusted where he is, and he was sent to the bank with it. He was worried and in debt, and he kept ten pounds back to put on a horse."

"Wot didn't win," said George cynically.

"No, it didn't. And unless he puts it into the bank first thing to-morrow it'll be found out, and they'll send him to prison. And—we've always held up our heads and been respectable."

That last was a cry which George recognised.

"There's your father," he hazarded.

"I know. But Charlie's afraid to tell him. And—and if he knew he wouldn't help. Father's terribly just and stern. He—he wouldn't save his own son from prison. Charlie's back at home now, but I know he hasn't said nothing. It was early closing day to-day, and Charlie was supposed to bank the money on his way home. That's how his master doesn't know about it yet. Ten pounds is such a lot of money. There—there doesn't seem to be anything we can do."

George's mind was wandering. He was back beside a stream on a perfect April day, glad to be alive, promising himself that George Carvey should ever afterwards live according to the laws of God and man. Until now he had kept that promise. Little had he dreamed that the temptation to break it should come from the girl who now walked so heavily beside him, hugging his arm.

"Once a bloke's been in prison," he muttered, "he don't get much chance."

"I know! I know!"

"People won't give 'im work, and he's got to live. Back to prison 'e goes sooner or later. There ain't no second chances once you've been in. Save a chap the first time, and you've likely saved him for life. Put him in for the first time, and you might as well put him in for life. I reckon I'll have to let you have the money for him."

She swung round upon him, staring half joyfully, half incredulously.

"But you—you haven't got ten pounds," she gasped.

"Haven't I? Do you think I haven't saved nothing. Maybe old Judas's wages aren't as bad as some makes out."

Half laughing, half crying, she almost embraced him, stammering her joy and gratitude. Did he really mean it? Could he, and would he, lend the money? Oh, if he only would! Charlie would pay him back in time. She would promise him that.

He listened to her soberly enough, knowing full well that Charlie could never repay him, even if he returned the money and paid usurious interest.

"You'd better go back 'ome and keep 'im there," he said heavily, "while I gets the money. I'll meet you outside your 'ouse in half an hour."

So he returned alone to Willowbank. Mr. Culling was pacing the twilight lawn behind the house, and it was easy for George to enter unobserved. In the study he did what he had to do. He had been quite correct about that drawer in the bureau. A child could have opened it.

A little later he met Charlie Voyce for the first time. He was leaning on a bicycle, waiting beside May on the roadside close to their father's cottage. In every respect he was unlike May, a pale-haired, pale-eyed, freckled young man on the verge of a breakdown, who gave George a damp hand to shake and showered upon him fulsome expressions of gratitude. After a little while he rode away with ten one-pound notes,



the symbol of his reprieve, in his breast pocket.

When they were alone, May turned to George with kindling eyes. She did not try to thank him again; that would come later when she could find the words.

"Comin' for a little walk, George?" she asked.

"Yes, but not far. You won't want to come far. There's summat I've got to tell you, May, and how you'll take it I don't know. There's a summat I've put off telling' you for a long time, but I reckon you've got to know to-night." He coughed and avoided her gaze. "Not so long ago I kind of thought—I 'ad a sort of hope—that one day you and me might get married."

She laughed softly.

"Oh, George! Why, if I hadn't been thinkin' the same thing——"

"Wait a minute," he said quickly. "Your brother ain't a thief, but I reckon I am. There, don't look like that! O' course I 'adn't got ten pounds—not nothing like it. 'Tain't the first time I've done with that sort o' thing. I bin in prison eight times, I 'ave. Once more won't make much difference. But your brother, he hasn't been there once, and it's the first time as breaks a man. Besides, he's your brother, and you've always been respected. I've a bad sheet, I 'ave, and nobody as knows me won't be surprised. Only I did think as I was goin' straight now, really I did."

She stared at him uncomprehendingly at first, and then, as she realised the import of the words which came tumbling jerkily from his lips, she bent and pressed her hand over her eyes and began to cry weakly, like a child. He stood at arm's length from her,

making no attempt to touch her, and muttering feebly: "Now, don't! Don't, now! Don't, my dear!"

Suddenly she lifted her head and opened her arms to him.

"Oh, George, I do love you! But you mustn't! You can't! We must go after Charlie and get that money back."

They kissed like two troubled children bearing the same disgrace.

"I reckon your brother wouldn't part up," said George grimly, "not even if I was willing to take that money back. Whenever I try to keep straight, summat always comes along. I reckon it ain't much good tryin'."

"You'll never take nothin' again!" she sobbed. "I'll see as you don't!"

"You won't see me no more," he muttered.

"Won't I?" cried the girl almost fiercely.

"Do you think I'm that sort? I reckon that if you can wait for me in prison I can wait for you here!"

And in George's heart there welled up a happiness which might have sprung from the fount of virtue.

\* \* \* \* \*

George Carvey, labourer, saved some time and trouble by pleading guilty at the quarter sessions, and, in view of his previous convictions, the judge no doubt did rightly in sentencing him to two years imprisonment. Asked if he had anything to say, he remarked: "I'm like the boss's magnolia. I've got a crooked streak in me, and I can't go straight."

This remark was considered rather amusing. It even found its way into the "Overheard at the Courts" column in one of the evening papers.



# JILTED

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LONDON

ANDREW McKIDDLE was no genius, but he was a worker. He got into Lorriman's at the age of eighteen, meant to stop there, and did. Some thought him mean, but then he had three elderly relatives whom he felt he might at some future time be called upon to help to support. The clan feeling was strong in McKiddle.

The elderly relatives all died, and all left a little money to Andrew. The family was reticent in family matters, and preferred to seem poorer than it really was. Andrew was advanced by Lorriman's. He felt justified in moving from his lodgings to a small flat in a block near the British Museum. His chief friend, Herbert Johnson, managing clerk to Murdle and Biston, solicitors, occupied a flat in the same building.

When he had been with Lorriman's for a quarter of a century, Andrew was made a departmental manager. Initiative was not his strong suit. But he now knew Lorriman's policy and methods all through from A to Z, could not make a mistake, and was inaccessible to any kind of temptation. Lorriman's thought rightly that this was worth something.

Then Andrew McKiddle went mad. He lost—out of business hours—his sense of the value of money. He bought clothes that he did not absolutely need, he took dancing lessons, he had his nails manicured, and—it all led up to that—he got engaged to Anna Ware, who was beautiful, twenty-five, and private secretary to an eminent Egyptologist. He had met her only three times, and he knew next to nothing about her.

Herbert Johnson shook his head over the engagement. He despaired. He knew nothing whatever of Anna Ware, and had never met her at all. But he had formed a definite opinion of her, and only a delicacy of feeling prevented him from imparting it to his friend Andrew. Andrew's Aunt Bertha and also her five daughters up

at Cricklewood strongly disapproved. There was an Uncle Samuel who was the husband of Aunt Bertha, but he did not count, and had long since ceased to expect it.

But opposition was useless. How can cold reason prevail against the impetuosity and hot blood of forty-three? For twenty-five years Andrew McKiddle had been merely a mechanical device used by Lorriman's in their business. He had discovered now that he was alive. Who could stop him?

Only one person. But she did it.

It was just three weeks after the engagement that in the evening McKiddle met his friend Johnson at the little restaurant which they both frequented. McKiddle looked depressed.

"I may as well tell you, Johnson—for everybody will know it to-morrow—my engagement with Miss Ware is at an end."

"Good! Very good! And why did she chuck you?"

"She hasn't chucked me. Why should she? What I mean to say is that I've just written the letter to her in which I myself put an end to the engagement."

"Ah!" said Johnson judicially. "Posted the letter yet?"

"Not yet. I was meaning to take a copy of it first. Why, there couldn't be anything wrong with it, could there?"

"There could be, and probably would be. But I can't advise where I don't know the facts."

"Well, I wish you would advise me. You can have the whole story. Ask me anything you like."

"Then why are you giving the girl up?"

"A whole lot of things. She's probably got a temper. She was in a bad temper when she accepted me—said so herself. I don't like her friends—at any rate, I don't like the only one I've seen. It's that Eve Langley. Miss Ware took me to her studio the Sunday afterwards. Shingled hair, cigarettes, and slang—that's Miss Langley. Sprawls about on cushions. Dark blue

knickers, and doesn't seem to care who knows it. She may be as clever as they say in her profession, but she's not my style at all. I hinted something of the kind to Miss Ware afterwards, putting it as nicely as possible, and she got quite short about it—said I could always go out when Eve happened to be there. And that same week—well, when you send two long letters to your feearnsy you expect something more than one postcard in reply, don't you? However, on the Saturday that week I took her to tea with my Aunt Bertha and my cousins at Cricklewood. It was very good of them to ask her, seeing they were

the more expensive of the two dinners provided. At least half of it she never touched. I ordered a small bottle of Sparkling Moselle, and she never touched that, either."

"I should have done the same in her place," said Johnson. "But continue."

"Then we went on to the theatre. I'd got dress circle seats. It's true they were complimentary, and the piece was coming off in another three days, but she wasn't to know that. After the first act she said she didn't blame me, because of course I couldn't have known. On the contrary, it was very kind of me. After the second



"'You're the prey of a designing woman. That Miss Ware is a harpy.'"

opposed to the marriage, and never even expected to like her. It was a nice tea, too—nothing ostentatious, but you could see trouble had been taken. And after tea my cousin Hilda sang us some of those dainty little French sharnsorns. And Miss Ware? I'll be absolutely just, Johnson. She was polite—she's always the lady—but nothing more. There was no special effort—no enthusiasm—no attempt to work in a few graceful compliments here and there. And on the way back all she said was that Uncle Samuel seemed a nice little worm. This week it was even worse. I took her out, and I did the thing really well. We started with dinner in Soho, and I chose

act she said: 'Need we bore ourselves stiff with any more of this?' So there it was. I took her out, of course—I had no choice. Else when I can have three things it annoys me to take only two of them. She insisted on travelling back on the top of a 'bus, and stood right under the electric light when she was saying 'Good night.' That finished it."

"Have you got anything else against her?"

"Well, she's not responsive. She doesn't let herself go. It's just as if she wasn't trying."

"You mean that you've not had the—er—ordinary privileges of an engaged man?"

"Can't say whether I've had them or not. I've never been given the chance to know. The only time I ever got her into a taxi, she made the man open the cab before she got in."

"Well," said Johnson, "it looks as if you ought to be glad to be quit of her. But you seemed very miserable when you came in. Why was that?"

"Well, Johnson, we don't understand women. They're wonderfully secretive creatures. With them some of the very strongest passions are so deeply veiled that nobody would suspect they were there. I'm not saying that I inspired such a passion. I may have done or I may not. She certainly accepted me at very short notice. Suppose that all this were, as you might say, camouflage. Suppose, when she gets my letter to-morrow morning, in a fit of madness she takes her life. Then I ask you, where am I? I should have to be at the inquest. The coroner might say anything, and it wouldn't do me any good at Lorriman's, either."

"I shouldn't worry about that, if I were you," said Johnson. "These torrential passions aren't much worn nowadays. In any case, I doubt if any girl of that age has ever managed to work it up for a man of fifty like yourself."

"Forty-three," said McKiddle indignantly.

"Sorry. You look fifty. No, I consider you to be in very great danger, McKiddle. If you'd already posted that letter, I doubt if I could have done anything for you."

"What danger?" asked McKiddle.

"If you'd had all my years of experience in a solicitor's office, with practically all the business of the office going through your hands, you wouldn't need to ask. You're the prey of a designing woman. That Miss Ware is a harpy. The thing's obvious. Leaving out personal appearance and a few other things, you're quite a catch for a girl like that. Did you tell her what income you'd got?"

"I didn't state it exactly. I said that I thought we could depend on six hundred a year, or a little more."

"Quite so. As I happen to know, and as Miss Ware's solicitors will soon discover when she presses her action for breach of promise, you've got nine hundred a year from salary and investments. She never meant to marry you. She's been doing her utmost to make you turn her down in order that she might bring this action. Those

two long letters of yours will be read out in court. You'll get a fairly hot time of it when you're cross-examined by the counsel for the plaintiff. You will have to explain why you told the poor girl lies about your income."

"Do you really mean all this?"

"Shouldn't say it if I didn't."

"I couldn't possibly have an action of that kind. Lorriman's wouldn't like it at all. Would you mind having a look at that letter, Johnson, and seeing what you can suggest? I've always maintained that you knew more about the law than most solicitors."

"Anyhow, I don't cost so much. But I'll come round and look at the letter. Waiter, our bills! Separate."

And presently Johnson sat by the fire in McKiddle's flat. He was provided with whisky and soda, an Almosta cigar, and the draft of the letter which would have been fatal if it had been posted. He looked through the letter, pressed his thin lips together, and said: "There's only one thing to do with that." He tore it in half and put it on the fire.

"Then you think it won't do?" said McKiddle.

"How did you guess it? Of course it won't do. If the case ever came on, that letter would admit nearly everything which you would want to deny on oath. You must not break off the engagement. You may say that she has lost all attraction for you, and that you no longer have the slightest affection for her. You may say that the more you see of her character, the less you like it. You may even imply that her personal appearance is not what it was. But you must not break off the engagement. On the contrary, you must say that you recognise your legal obligations, and will carry out the contract if she chooses to enforce it. Look here, I'll dictate it all to you."

He did, and the letter was sent.

\* \* \* \* \*

The letter reached Anna Ware on a sunny morning when she was feeling particularly fit and happy after a good night. She read it with great joy while she was dressing. She found time to write a brief reply to it before she went on to her secretarial duties with the Egyptologist. The reply was as follows:

"DEAR ANDREW—Of course we'll chuck it. You're quite right. But who on earth

did you get to write that letter for you? Not a bit like you, but a perfect scream, all the same. And of course we'll be friends when we meet at the dancing class. Sincerely yours."

The Egyptologist tried in vain to work that morning. He had to make a speech at a banquet in the evening, and that speech weighed very heavily on his mind. Shortly after twelve he told Miss Ware that she could go.

At the bottom of Bury Street she encountered Eve Langley.

afterwards to the wickedest play of which there might happen to be a *matinée* performance that day.

It was after lunch, when Eve had lit her cigarette, that she said: "I can understand why you wanted to break it off. What I never shall understand is how you came to accept him."

"I don't suppose I shall, either," said Anna. "I would have got engaged to the postman or the dustman that night if they'd asked me, and felt grateful. Then of course I'd only seen him by artificial light, and



"I've kept the best to the last. I'm jilted."

"Looking pretty joyous," said Eve. "Anything particular happened?"

"Yes. My dear old professor doesn't want me, and I've got all the rest of the day to myself."

"Don't amount to much," said Eve.

"But that's not all. I've kept the best to the last. I'm jilted. I'm never, never, never going to be Mrs. Andrew McKiddle."

Eve held out both hands to her. "My dear, I do congratulate you."

So, to celebrate the occasion, they decided to lunch in the West End, and to go on

hadn't noticed how thin his hair was on the top, though, of course, that ought not to weigh with one."

"The thinner the hair, the less it would weigh," said Eve.

"I'd had a perfectly awful day," said Anna. "I'd a great row with Mrs. Bennish in the morning because I'd brought in my own tin bath, and she said it made work. And I said she couldn't expect me to use the fixed bath as long as she washed her dog in it. That day my Professor was clean off his head."

"I thought you liked him."

"Like him? I adore him. But there are days when he goes cranky. Then he remembers a whole lot of things which have never happened, and makes it a grievance because you don't remember them, too. He accused me of having lost his income tax return, and I'd never had it. I can't lose papers. It's not in me. Next day he found he'd left it in his dressing-room and never even taken it out of the envelope. Once he starts, there's no stopping him. He began to find a lot more faults, all unjust, and I began to cry, and he said I was a fool, and had better go out to lunch. I went out

to lunch, and abused the waiter for adding up my bill wrong, and he'd added it up quite right. I went back to work, and the old man kept me two hours overtime without even apologising. So I got no time for dinner, and was half an hour late for the dancing. And when that little bouncer came along, being as nice as ever he could and praising me up to the skies, and calling me the queen of the stars—oh, I don't know how it happened, but it did. And I'm glad it's all over. You chuck that cigarette, Eve. We've got to make a dash for the theatre."



## HARBOUR SONG.

**A** LITTLE ship is rocking  
Beside the wave-worn pier,  
And swift the gulls are flocking  
From reedy bar and weir.

For birds of kindred feather,  
Whose white wings breast the gale,  
Do often meet together  
To bid each other "Hail!"

I've heard the women singing,  
When ships went out at dawn,  
How all the sea-gulls winging  
Are souls of sailors gone.

And so we find them dreaming  
By every wave-worn pier,  
And where the sails are gleaming  
We see them flash and veer.

They tell unending stories,  
And each a tale repeats,  
To keep alive the glories  
Of ancient sailing fleets.

And early in the morning,  
With voices ominous,  
Their true and trusted warning  
Of storm they shout to us.

What wonder that they hover  
By harbour-light and buoy  
As does an ardent lover  
Around his chosen joy?

DOROTHY CHOATE HERRIMAN.

# SALVAGE

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

IT'S like that down there. One minute you can be in blue water, with never a hint of trouble, and the next piled high and dry on the fangs of a coral reef.

Simultaneously with the impact, Strode crawled out of the cockpit and along the sloping deck. The cutter had slithered on to the reef, listed to port, and now lay on her bilge in half a fathom of water. The tide was on the ebb, but there was no surf, which about adjusted the balance of fortune. It remained to sit tight and pray for eight feet on the flood.

Strode contrived to douse sail, and was clambering overboard to discover just what he had done to himself, when a canoe full of paddling Kanakas, with a

and lurching over the treacherous coral. Even at that distance he cut an extraordinary figure. He was tall, and so thin that in his sagging ducks he looked like a length of tape fluttering in the breeze. He stopped a few yards distant, propped himself more securely on his spindle shanks, and raised a gaunt and bearded face to the stranded cutter.

"What's all this?" he demanded, as though haranguing a trespasser in his back yard.

"I'm not sure yet," said Strode.

"But what made you do it? There's a pass half a mile further north."

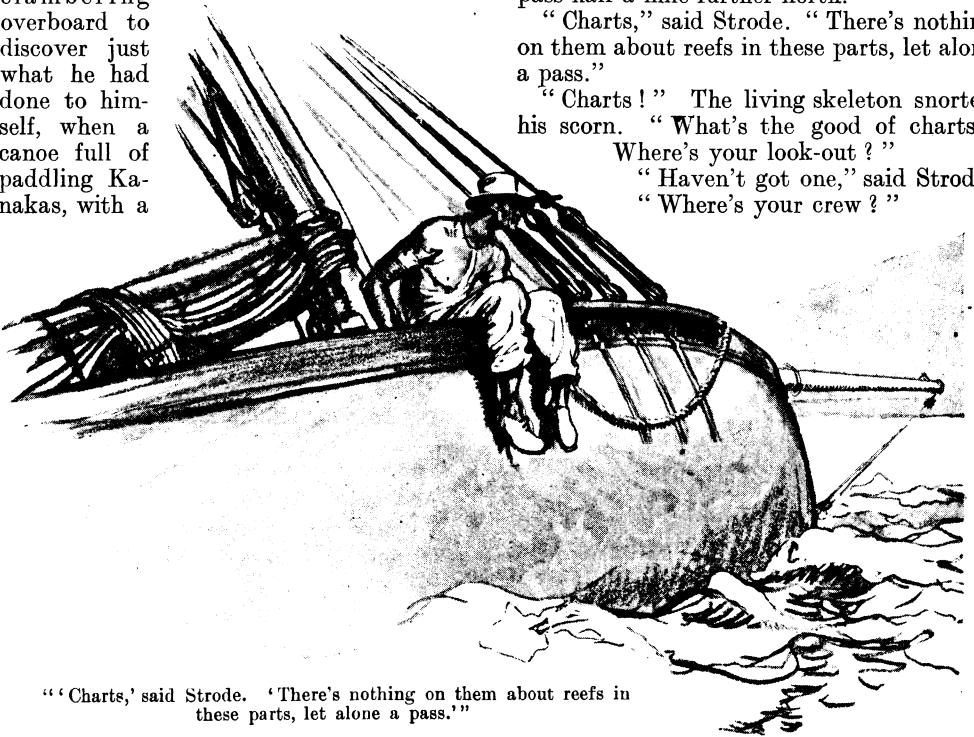
"Charts," said Strode. "There's nothing on them about reefs in these parts, let alone a pass."

"Charts!" The living skeleton snorted his scorn. "What's the good of charts?"

"Where's your look-out?"

"Haven't got one," said Strode.

"Where's your crew?"



"Charts," said Strode. "There's nothing on them about reefs in these parts, let alone a pass."

white man at the steering oar, shot out from the island that lay invitingly green not a mile distant.

The canoe made fast on the lagoon side of the reef, and the white man came splashing

"Haven't that, either."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

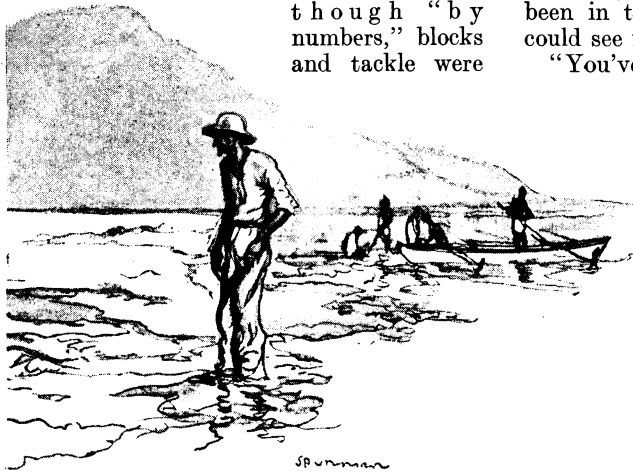
"Wait for the tide," said Strode. "Won't you come aboard?"

The cutter was listed at an angle that made it necessary to crawl most of the way, but in time the two men reached the saloon settee. Here it transpired, over a carefully-manipulated glass, that the skeleton's name was Tatham, and that he was growing vanilla on the neighbouring island.

"You must come ashore for a spell and let my tame carpenter put you to rights," he suggested pleasantly enough. "It doesn't look to me as if you've done much more than frayed your keel and stove in a plank or two. We have a dry-dock of sorts."

Strode was vaguely suspicious. Tatham's manner, as well as his appearance, was dead against him. His eyes seemed never still, his mouth twitched, and his short, clipped utterance gave the impression that he was eternally afraid of saying too much. However, one meets all sorts in this entertaining old world of ours, and Strode had learnt to await developments before coming to definite conclusions.

Certainly Tatham knew what to do in an emergency, and was not long about doing it. The tide had no sooner turned than he unfurled himself from the settee, fluttered up through the fo'castle hatch, and summoned his crew. It came, splashing and yelling across the reef like a marine cavalry charge, and stood at attention waist-deep while Tatham addressed it in fluent *bêche-de-mer*. Then, as though "by numbers," blocks and tackle were



"Charts! . . . 'What's the good of charts? Where's your look-out?'"

rigged across the reef, and when the cutter began to lift, twelve hefty Kanakas dug their toes into the coral and pulled as one. The cutter moved, and continued to move. To the accompaniment of a demoniac chorus

and sundry bumpings, she traversed the reef and slid into deep water on the other side.

"There!" said Tatham.

"Thanks," said Strode, and they went up to the house.

It was a neat little place, run with extraordinary efficiency by an army of Solomon "boys."

"Catch 'em young, treat 'em firm but square, and you can't better them," Tatham observed over a refresher on the verandah. "I want you," he added in a curiously eager way he had, "to notice things."

"I am," said Strode, "and it seems to me you do yourself uncommonly well."

Tatham's glance traversed his legs, outstretched before him like railway lines, and came to rest on the immense buffers of his feet.

"I hope so," he said. "But I don't want to influence you one way or another. Just form your own opinion, and let me have it plump and plain when I ask for it, that's all."

"Opinion of what?" Strode asked.

"Me, mostly," said Tatham. "I won't say any more now, if you don't mind. It's your first impressions I'm after, and they're too valuable to spoil." His mouth twitched into a smile. "It's all right," he added reassuringly, "I'm not daft."

"I never said you were," Strode defended.

"No, you're too polite for that. Haven't been in these parts long enough. But I could see it occurred to you, all the same."

"You've got imaginitis," protested Strode, "that's your trouble."

"Perhaps. I'm not denying it. There's precious little I'll deny after three years in the Malitas."

"I seem to have heard of *them*," mused Strode, recalling a chance description of the group as a "pestilential paradise."

"Have you?" Tatham struggled out of his chair and draped himself on the verandah rail. "Well, add a hundred per cent. to anything you've heard, and you'll still be short of what they can do with you. Take a look at *me*, and try to believe it when I tell you that I'm twice

the man here and now that I was when I left those cursed islands a year ago. Yes," he added, as Strode's expression remained credulous, "you've got quite a good poker face."



A gong somewhere inside the house relieved the situation. "That's dinner," said Tatham, "but there's no hurry. Have a shower."

Strode had one, and found it good. But everything on Tatham's island was like that. Nothing was lacking to make that verdure-clad chip of volcanic rock a place of comfort and content, yet its owner had apparently found neither. Strode's initial suspicion of him gave place to pity. The man was a scourge unto himself. And why should it be? If it was his personal appearance that troubled him, and Strode felt convinced that it was, why should he care what he looked like, marooned out there in the Pacific?

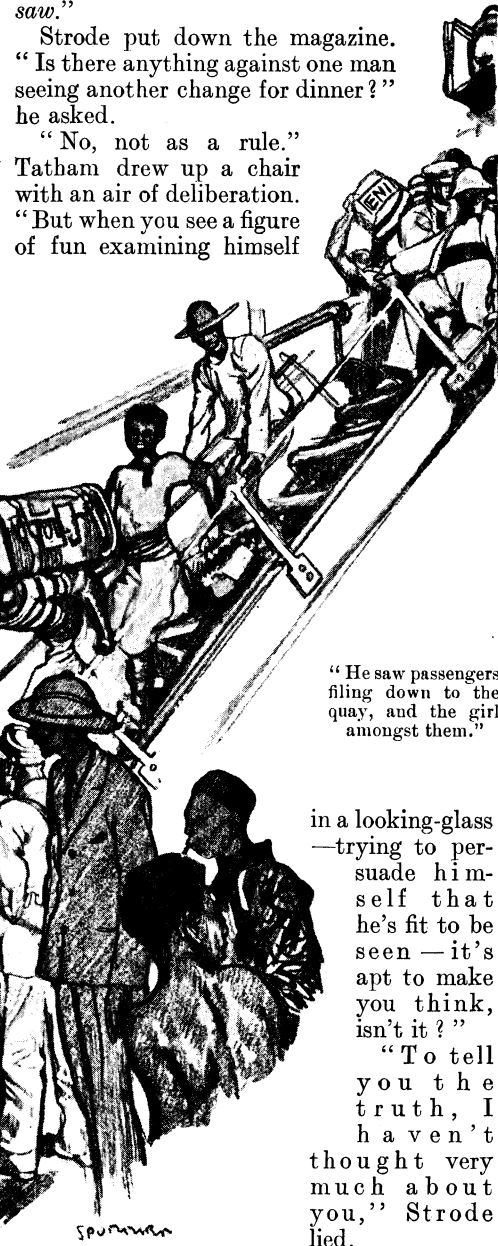
The problem remained a mystery for nearly a week, during which time the Kanaka carpenter did wonders with Strode's cutter. The dry-dock consisted of a natural channel in the rock built up with chocks of wood, and it held her as snugly as one could wish. . . . But to return to Tatham. One evening, while changing for dinner, he left his bedroom door ajar, and Strode caught a glimpse of him studying his reflection in a full-length mirror that no man ought to have owned. What was more, he no sooner realised

"Explain what?" said Strode, looking up from the magazine he had been pretending to read.

"Your poker face won't help you this time," blurted Tatham. "You saw."

Strode put down the magazine. "Is there anything against one man seeing another change for dinner?" he asked.

"No, not as a rule." Tatham drew up a chair with an air of deliberation. "But when you see a figure of fun examining himself



"He saw passengers fling down to the quay, and the girl amongst them."

in a looking-glass—trying to persuade himself that he's fit to be seen—it's apt to make you think, isn't it?"

"To tell you the truth, I haven't thought very much about you," Strode lied.

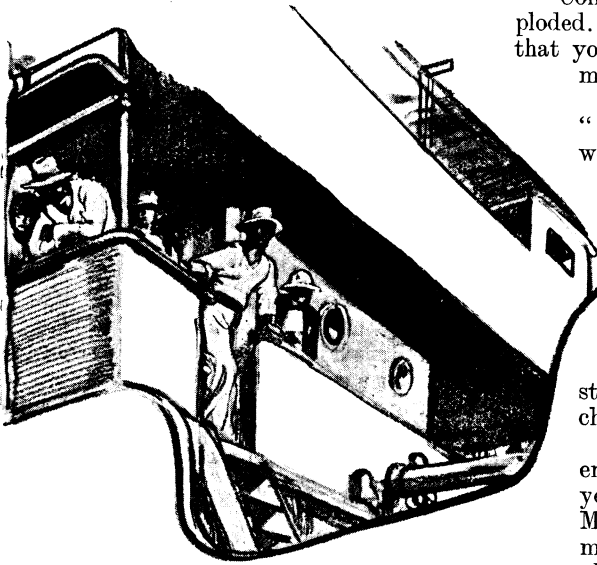
"You can't put me off that way," objected Tatham. "If you remember, you were to give me your opinion plump and plain when I asked for it, and I'm asking now." His eyes became fixed in a penetrating stare.

that he had been seen than he skipped out of Strode's line of vision as though shot, and after an awkward pause appeared in the doorway, flushing to the ears.

"I shall have to explain," he jerked out.

"How did I strike you that first day, for instance?"

Strode studied the ceiling in a state of



disappointment, "I'm afraid I shall never get at your real impressions. You're too considerate."

"Considerate be hanged!" Strode exploded. "I stand by my original contention that you've got imaginitis. Throw it off, man! Forget yourself!"

"I wish I could," muttered Tatham. "And if I belonged to myself, it wouldn't be difficult, either."

"Well, who else do you belong to?"

"A girl—in Sydney." Tatham swallowed hard.

"I'd like to tell you, if you don't mind."

"Mind?" Strode resumed his study of the ceiling. "Get it off your chest."

"Thanks," said Tatham. "We're engaged. We've been engaged four years. The first three I spent in the Malitas, trying to make money, and made it. What was more, I got out alive, and the Malitas don't like that."

Anyway, I carried my bones to Sydney, and on the way learnt what those islands have done to me. You see, I was pretty well used to myself by that time, but others weren't, apparently. Girls giggled, and men made cheap jokes about me in the smoking-room. That gem about having to look twice for my shadow was one of them."

A minah bird strutted in from the verandah, pecked at Tatham's ducks, presumably to see if there was anything inside, and flew off into the bush.

"I didn't mind at first," he went on absently. "Who were *they*, anyway? I was on my way to someone who'd understand—appreciate what I'd been through. But it made me think, all the same, and when kids barracked me on Circular Quay, I thought some more. In fact, by the time the ferry boat had carried me to the harbour suburb where that someone lived, I was thinking so hard that I went clean past it. What if she didn't know me? And why should she know me? In appearance I'd changed beyond recognition. And in character, personality, or whatever it is that makes a woman choose one man before another, I might have changed, too. Three years is a long time—in the Malitas."

Tatham sat silent a moment, staring out at the bush.

"The rest ought to make you laugh," he said. "If you can believe it, I went three

acute discomfort. "As a perfect god-send," he began, but Tatham cut him short.

"In *appearance*," he barked.

"Appearance?" Strode pondered the matter, with Tatham's eyes boring for his soul. "Well, as a bit thin, if you want to know."

"Ah, a bit thin!" Tatham's head was at

a speculative angle. "I didn't, by any chance, make you want to laugh, or perpetrate jokes about having to look twice for my shadow?"

"No," said Strode, "I can't say you did."

"But then you're a gentleman, and that makes the deuce of a difference."

Tatham relapsed into his chair. "If you saw a toad being tortured by school-boys, or a comic-looking man hating the sight of himself—and there's not so much difference between the two as you might think—I doubt if you'd laugh at all. No," he ended on a note of



times round Sydney Harbour on that ferry, and each time I came to the pier where I ought to have landed, I couldn't bring myself to do it. Why don't you laugh?"

"I don't want to," said Strode. "I've felt much the same myself before now."

"You have?" Tatham leant forward. "Then perhaps you'll understand when I tell you that in the end I came away, without landing at all, and buried myself here."

"And now you're turning in your grave," Strode prompted, "wondering if you're enough like your old self to have another try."

For answer, Tatham handed him a photograph, and Strode sat looking at it with the approval one is forced to employ under such circumstances. It was of a woman, and told as much about her as a photograph ever can.

"It isn't a matter of having another try," Tatham went on, "although that's what I've been summoning the pluck to do ever since I left Sydney. She arrives in Papeete to-morrow week. She's written me that she's tired of waiting—and I don't blame her—that if we put it off much longer we shall be strangers, and she's right; that she'll take me as she finds me." Tatham laughed raucously. "'As she finds me,' if you please!" He pushed a second photograph across the table. "That's how she remembers *me*. Wonderful likeness, isn't it?"

Strode could see none. He found himself gazing alternately at a handsome, sturdy-looking man in the prime of life, and—Tatham.

"Well?" his host was saying. "Do you see anything else for it but to drown myself?"

Strode thrust the photograph from him with a gesture of impatience. He had to do something.

"You make me tired," he complained.

"Sorry," said Tatham, "but I seem to be getting at your real opinion of me, and that's what I was after."

"My opinion of you," returned Strode, "is that until you can forget yourself you'll be insufferable. You're self-conscious to a pitch bordering on mania."

"Go on," Tatham encouraged gently, and Strode went on, principally because he had no notion how to stop.

"Just because you've lost a bit of weight, working like a horse for the girl you want, you seem to think she won't want you. Women aren't like that—at

least, any woman worth working for." He could see Tatham bridle at that. "Drown yourself if you like, of course, but what I suggest is that you hack off that beard of yours, come into Papeete with me, and meet her as though you'd only parted the day before yesterday."

Tatham remained silent and still for some time. "I wonder," he muttered presently, "I wonder if you're right."

As a matter of fact, Strode rather wondered himself. He had been forced to say something, and had said it, but—The potentialities of that "but" sent cold shivers down his spine. These were in no way alleviated when Tatham took him at his word and accompanied him to Papeete a few days later.

It was a dreadful undertaking, but apart from his sympathy for the man, which had grown into actual liking, Strode felt that he owed as much to a kindly and generous host.

They took rooms at an obscure boarding-house, and one of the first things Tatham did was to go to a barber. The effect was indescribable. Instead of making him more like his photograph, the removal of his beard seemed to heighten the dissimilarity. Strode felt that he ought to be treating the whole affair as a joke, but never for an instant could he bring himself to do so. As the fatal day approached, he found himself becoming as nervous as his charge, and when it actually dawned, Tatham was the calmer of the two. A sort of dumb resignation seemed to have settled upon him. He dressed with extreme care, and sat in a cane chair on the verandah most of the morning. Then, when the incoming steamer hove into view, he rose with extraordinary calm.

"I must be getting along," he said.

"Would you like me to come with you?" Strode suggested, at the same time hoping that his offer would be refused.

"Not on any account," said Tatham. "The rest's up to *me*. I've changed the plan of action a bit, but, I think, for the better."

"What are you going to do?" Strode could not help asking.

Tatham smiled his twisted smile. "As you seem to take such a kindly interest, I'll tell you. I find your idea of meeting as though we had only just parted impossible. I should be forcing myself on her, and that's the last thing I want to do." He squared his lean shoulders. "No. I'm going to put

myself to the test. If she recognises me, well and good; if not——” He turned abruptly and strode down the avenue.

So *that* was the idea. Strode paced the verandah, trying to persuade himself that he was done with the whole affair. If a man chose to deliberately sacrifice his one chance of happiness on the altar of some crazy notion of ethics, let him do it. He deserved all he would get. *Of course* the girl wouldn't recognise him. Who would? And what then? Strode asked himself several questions during the next five minutes, and answered them first by claiming that they were none of his business, then by snatching up a pair of binoculars and hurrying down to the “beach.”

From a balcony overlooking the quay he witnessed the entire comedy at close range. He saw the usual “steamer day” crowd of variegated humanity, with Tatham sprouting from it like an ungainly growth taken root at the foot of the gangway. He saw passengers filing down to the quay, and the girl amongst them. There was no mistaking her. Through the glasses he could even see the set expression of her face as she walked clean past her statuesque *fiancé*, glanced about her, and hailed the nearest cab.

He saw no more at the moment because all his energies were centred on overtaking the decrepit vehicle, and when he did, perspiration rather clouded his vision. But the girl was there. He discerned her dimly, as through tears, staring at him in dumb amaze.

“Excuse me,” he panted, “but weren't you to have been met by Mr. Tatham?”

It seemed to him that she nodded.

“He's ill,” Strode plunged on; “nothing serious, but I came instead, and——”

Heaven knows what he said, but when he had said it the girl's voice came to him calm and distinct.

“Why are you telling me this?”

“Because Tatham's a friend of mine. Because——”

“But do you have to lie for him?” The voice was even calmer and more distinct. “If he was too ill to come, how is it that I saw him on the quay?”

“You saw him?”

“Certainly, standing at the foot of the gangway.”

“You knew him?”

“Of course I knew him.”

“Then why didn't you speak?”

The girl did not answer at once. Her lips were compressed as she glanced about her at the dusty road, the overhanging flamboyants.

“Because,” she said at last, “he didn't know *me*.”

Under the stress of this amazing—yet, when he came to think of it, perfectly natural—conclusion on her part, Strode was stricken to silence.

“It's very kind of you to have done what you have,” she went on, “and, as a friend of Jim's, I'm sure you'll see that it's best for both of us not to let him know that I came at all. I shall go back by the next boat.”

“I don't think so,” said Strode, “not when you've heard what I have to say.”

“Please don't trouble,” urged the girl. “Nothing anyone could say would alter things now. Can't you see what an impossible position I'm in? It was a terrible mistake. I should never have come.” She gave a hard little laugh. “Four years is too long. A woman changes, and men's memories are short. I began to think of these things some time ago, and on the boat——”

“On the boat,” Strode continued glibly, “the idea took such a hold that you decided to prove it one way or the other by letting Tatham recognise you first. If he did, well and good. If not——”

“You seem to know a great deal,” murmured the girl.

“You see, I've been with Tatham nearly a month,” said Strode, “and *that was his idea, too*.”

He told her all.

\* \* \* \* \*

The cab had some difficulty in turning on the narrow road, but finally accomplished the feat, and proceeded at a broken-kneed trot in the direction of an obscure boarding-house on the outskirts of Papeete.

Here it interrupted the packing operations of one of the guests by coming to a full stop under his window. He looked out, dropped a shirt as though it had been a red-hot coal, and a moment later was clattering down the verandah steps.

It was a most amazing cab



"You're not engaged, or approaching engaged, are you?"

# CORINNA'S WEDDING GOWN

By PAULA HUDD

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

THIS is the story of Corinna's wedding gown. You might think that Corinna's wedding gown would never make a story, that it would be utterly unobtrusive, because gowns were the everyday business of her life, and Corinna might reasonably be expected to make holiday in sackcloth. For Corinna donned all the most elaborate and expensive gowns in the salons of Messrs. Harper, and showed them off with inimitable grace to Harpers' extensive *clientèle*.

And Ronald Carthew chanced to see her during Harpers' great spring dress parade.

He had been at Oxford with young Harper, and was on his way to his office, to fetch him out to lunch, when, through an archway, over the heads of a crowd of women, he caught sight of Corinna.

She was displaying a black evening gown. Her small, dark head, with its shining closely-dressed hair, was set on a throat of Grecian proportions. Long black earrings dangled from her small ears, and, despite the fact that Ronald had a particular hatred of earrings and veils on women, he thought at that moment that he had never seen a woman look so beautiful.

Things might never have developed beyond that—never have gone further than that momentary glimpse of her, stored for ever in the dim gallery of his memory pictures—had he not lingered till she emerged again.

And this time it was a walking suit, a spring suit of tweed with a hint of violet in it, a rakish little velvet hat of sublime simplicity, and a big woollen scarf thrown carelessly across one shoulder. She had even changed into brogues with more thoroughness than was customary in these matters, and big brown gauntlet gloves encased her hands.

Ronald fell hopelessly in love with her then. In slim, sequined black with long earrings she was an inaccessible goddess, but in country tweeds she was a girl—his girl! He saw himself swinging down a country lane beside her, a couple of dogs nosing along ahead. He saw himself sitting beside her in the Daimler, his hands hovering over those brown gauntleted ones as he taught her to drive. He saw himself walking into Little Setton Church with her, still in that adorable tweed suit, and coming out again with her as his wife. Ronald felt quite sure he was glimpsing his dream of heaven.

Corinna's dream of heaven had hitherto consisted of a smart suburban wedding, a flat, a maid and a two-seater car, with a nice clean-looking husband who wore silk socks, and for whom she sent at least one dress shirt to the laundry every week.

When Ronald Carthew, of the Hereford Carthews, had manoeuvred an introduction and seen her on several occasions, the dream underwent some adjustment. The scene of the wedding was shifted to St. Margaret's, the flat became a house in Mayfair, the two-seater turned into a Rolls-Royce limousine complete with chauffeur, and the husband became Ronald Carthew, whose socks and dress shirts were entirely the affair of his valet.

At their fourth meeting he drew her on to talk of herself, and elicited the information that her mother was the widow of a country solicitor, with an annuity of two hundred and fifty a year. Corinna herself had been indifferently educated, and had nothing to turn to earning account save her good looks, and, because of her height, she decided to be a mannequin.

They were dining at one of the most exclusive of the smaller restaurants, Corinna in a very simple grey frock, with a big black hat shading her smoke-coloured eyes. She

smiled very rarely, so that Ronald, sitting opposite to her, but at a slight angle, had her perfect profile in almost perpetual repose against the droop of her black hat. Corinna was quite aware that this was the pose that suited her best, her chin uptilted, her mouth closed with just the suggestion of a droop at its corners, her thick black lashes casting a faint shadow on her creamy cheeks.

"My parents are both dead," Ronald said. He was impatient of these detailed explanations, but felt that they were necessary. They were among the dull things that had to be got through when one met one's girl and saw one's dream of heaven within reach. "My father's sister was my guardian till I came of age, and now she's guardian to my kid sister."

"Oh, you have a sister?" Momentarily Corinna forgot her pose and opened big grey eyes at him.

"Yes. You must meet Phyllis. She's a nice kid—just home from finishing school. She's coming out this season, I believe. Anyhow, there's a deuce of a fuss about furbelows going on down at my aunt's place."

"You mustn't scoff at furbelows," Corinna said. "If it were not for furbelows, where would I be?"

The plaintive note was very pretty and very appealing. Ronald managed to touch her hand, before the waiter appeared with the next course, and to look—a long, long look—into her grey eyes.

Corinna flushed a little and the corners of her mouth lifted. It wasn't in the programme of the pose at all, but, though it marred the purely Grecian effect of her profile, it made her look five years younger.

Ronald decided to put one foot into his heaven before someone shut the door. "You're not engaged, or approaching engaged, are you, Corinna?"

She shook her head slowly from side to side, a quite definite negative that yet subtly conveyed the impression that she didn't suppose "No" meant very much more to him than "Yes."

"And you're not one of those terribly modern girls who prefer a career to marriage?"

Corinna's mouth lifted again. "I've only tried the career—so far," she said.

He wanted to kiss her for that. "Well, when you're tired of the career, do you mind marrying me for a change?"

Corinna went quite white with the unexpectedness of it. She wasn't very used to

humble young men who were afraid the door of their heaven might close if they didn't put a foot in. Most of the men she had known seemed confident that any key on their bunch would fit.

"You want me to marry you?"

He nodded with boyish emphasis. "Please."

Corinna posed again. It seemed incredible. She had only to lift her finger, and here was a wealthy man, a potential barrister, waiting to turn her wildest dreams into reality. He was quite a nice, tolerable boy, too.

Her smoke-grey eyes half closed; she lifted her chin a little. She was going to say "Yes" very quickly and make quite certain. And softly, seductively the orchestra crept in on her thoughts with a haunting, heart-stirring melody.

"Oh, Ronald," she said, spoiling the pose with a little anxious frown, "are you quite sure?"

Taking her home to Wimbledon in his car, Ronald did his best to convince her that he was quite, quite sure. "I adored you from the first minute that I saw you," he confessed. "And when you came in in that stunning country get-up—" They were running near the Common, and it was very dark. Ronald slowed down and put his arm round her. "Oh, Corinna, I do love you! I should awfully like to kiss you!"

Corinna lifted cool red lips. He kissed them rather shyly. "You—you do care a bit, don't you? And you will marry me?"

Corinna tucked her right hand in his arm, and with her left she caressed the soft upholstery of the Daimler.

"I would like to marry you, Ron," she said; and he seemed quite satisfied.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was Phyllis who sowed the first seeds of doubt. He had gone down to his aunt's place to tell them of his engagement, and now he was wandering round the old garden, with Phyllis hanging on to his arm.

"You love her very much, I expect, Ron?"

"Well, you see, she's so beautiful, Phil."

"And she—is she frightfully in love with you?"

That pulled him up with a slight jar. "She's promised to marry me," he said, and felt that he was putting it lamely.

"Yes, but is she marrying you because you've got a decent income, or because she just can't get along without you?"

The meaning that underlay the almost boyish casualness of her voice drew Ronald's thoughts from the main issue.

"What on earth do you know about love, kid? You're not telling me there's someone you can't get along without."

He turned to look at her. Her face was almost on a level with his, her very jolly, rather plain face. Her figure was the lithe, muscular figure of the modern sports-loving school-girl. A thick plait of beautifully burnished brown hair hung down to her waist.

"It seems to me," she said slowly, her wide-set young blue eyes intent on the mass of daffodils ahead of them, "that no girl would choose marriage if her heart didn't drive her to it. Nine couples out of ten seem to make a muddle of it, so it isn't an easy game, Ron; it can't be if so many people fail at it. People go and marry for such stupid reasons."

"Such as?"

"Oh, Ron, there was a girl at school who ran away and married the local butcher's son because he looked such a dear in flannels. And when October came she ran back home again because he looked such a butcher's son in an overcoat."

Ronald put his head back and shouted with laughter, but Phyllis remained very grave.

"I'm serious, Ron. That is the sort of thing people marry for. Look at Auntie and Uncle. Uncle married Auntie because she was county, and he wanted the right sort of sons to carry on the Umberton traditions. And now they haven't any children of their own, and they're getting old, but they never sit and hold hands like old Mr. and Mrs. Carter in the village."

They had come upon the daffodils, a wealth of gold guarded by green sentinels. Ronald fell to his dreaming again, and saw Corinna coming to him through the flowers.

"You'll like her, Phil," he said at last. "She's coming with me to the Carthew Home to-morrow."

"Oh, Ron, was that necessary?" Phyllis thought of the Home that her grandfather had founded and endowed, a rather grim, grey building peopled by a starched staff and fifty little girls in thick blue frocks, with heavy black boots that showed several inches of thick ribbed stocking above them.

"She wanted to come when I told her about it. I explained that the eldest Carthew always took over one of the

governorships. I haven't been down for ages. It's time I put in an appearance."

"But she's sure to hate it, Ron—it's so Victorian and dismal."

"Ah, you don't know her. She'll be sweet with the kids."

Phyllis shook her head. "Don't be too sanguine, my dear. I bet her first words, when she sees the poor kids, will be: 'Oh, what horrible frocks!'"

Sounds of the first luncheon gong came faintly on the breeze, and they turned their steps to the house again. Phyllis became very much the school-girl. "I bet I'm right," she went on. "Fifty of your favourites to a dance record for the gramophone that that's what she'll say. Is it a bet?"

"What about a witness?" Ronald questioned, humouring her.

Phyllis raised her eyes to his with fine scorn. "Ron, as if I didn't trust you *utterly!*"

He took the fine flavour of that back to his chambers with him.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Carthew Orphanage is situated in a South London street. It stands well back from the road, withdrawing itself in dignified decay from a suburb that does its morning shopping in dilapidated dance slippers.

Ronald's grandfather had founded and endowed the orphanage in the days when, at long intervals, a horse 'bus rumbled its leisurely, lumbering way along the main road to Croydon. The atmosphere of those spacious days still clung to the old house, and its weather-beaten face had an air of stoic indifference to the clang and clamour of the modern motor traffic.

The orphanage had been founded in unusual circumstances. While spending a holiday in Cornwall, Ronald's grandfather had been saved from drowning by a man who lost his own life in the attempt. The man had proved to be an impecunious solicitor living in Kennington, and he left a widow and three young daughters. Old Carthew had thereupon founded an orphanage for the daughters of solicitors, and placed his rescuer's widow in it as Matron. The three daughters had been its first inmates, and had since married, each receiving a handsome dowry.

And now year by year several solemn-faced little girls entered its portals, to emerge some years later fully competent to take up posts as clerks in solicitors' offices. There were three governorships, always held

by a Carthew, a Harper, and the senior member of Bolands, Carthew's solicitors.

All this Ronald explained to Corinna as he motored her from Harpers' on the following Saturday afternoon. Corinna, slipping by the crowded trams and 'buses carrying the town workers homewards, was blissfully conscious of her own good fortune.

When Ronald's explanation came to an end, and congestion in the traffic hindered conversation, she fell to dreaming of her wedding gown. She visioned it as of superb simplicity, so white as to make a miracle of her little dark head. It had been tacitly understood that her mother was to provide but the simplest of trousseaux, and that there was to be a glorious week of shopping in Paris after the event.

The wedding gown had not been discussed so far. Perhaps it was as well that she knew nothing of the picture that adorned Ronald's house of dreams—the picture of Corinna emerging from a country church in a simple suit of tweed—Corinna, his wife.

So lost in her dreams was she that as they drew up before the orphanage, she almost expected to find herself stepping into the porch of a church.

The Matron, new to her post, greeted them with nervous effusiveness. It did not occur to her that Ronald's nervousness outmatched her own.

Ronald turned to Corinna. "Er—I—I brought my—er—my future wife along, Matron, to—er—look around, you know." His fingers just touched Corinna's hand.

Something electric ran from her finger tips to her heart. She had planned to be very much the gracious lady to the staff of the orphanage. This queer inward disturbance was upsetting her pose. She was amazingly conscious of a half-formed wish that Ronald were not rich—she, Corinna!

She held a slim hand out to the Matron. "How d'you do?" she said with chill sweetness, and, lifting her chin, found her poise again.

They were ushered into a large room redolent of furniture cream and musty books. Mr. Harper, senior, rose ponderously from a heavily-carved leather-seated chair. The leather had visibly borne his weight from time immemorial.

This was an encounter which Corinna had not reckoned upon. She had never spoken to the Boss, and wondered now if he would realise that she was one of his *employés*.



She found that Ronald was carrying the situation off quite naturally.

"I hope you're well, sir. May I introduce my *fiancée*? The first and last time, I hope, that I shall rob you of anything, sir!"

Mr. Harper extended a fat hand and, in defiance of three chins and an immeasurable waist, his voice was soft as silk and strangely musical.

"Miss Froome, I believe. If you continue to ally such discrimination with your thieving proclivities, Ronald, I shall have to find safer storage for my treasures."

He had remembered her name! Corinna blushed. Ronald thought it was sweet of her. He didn't guess that she was blushing

and from whose thin, ropy throat came a voice that boomed round the room like a foghorn.

They all sat round the solid, shiny table and settled the destinies of little girls who would come into the orphanage sadly, and the destinies of bigger girls who would leave it gladly.

Corinna wished the Matron wouldn't be quite so silkily servile to the governors and



"They lined up, the little ones in front of the big ones."

for shame because of the things she had said of the Boss. The thought took vague shape in her mind that he was being loyal to one of his *employés*, so few of whom were truly loyal to him.

Then she was introduced to the solicitor, who was as lean as Mr. Harper was fat,

so snappily superior to the others of the staff who were present.

Then, the business of the day being settled, they all went into the large hall to see the girls. They passed, a ponderous procession, across the polished floor to the platform beneath a high window at the far

end, Mr. Harper leading with the Matron, his voice a musical accompaniment to her staccato remarks and the tap-tap of their heels on the wood.

Then, from another door, the girls emerged decorously, two by two, forming into a solemn, solid little square, blinking across the room with shy, surreptitious glances at the group of great ones by the window.



"I used to be a little girl at this orphanage, and I hated the thick dress and the thick stockings and the thick boots so much that I ran away. . . . There isn't any reason now for you to run away, is there?"

Thick boots, thick stockings, thick dresses, thick and thin hair scraped back and tied with a wizened black bow that dare not have wings. Old Harper didn't enjoy the

sight of them, but thought it was because they happened to be a plain lot of girls. The solicitor looked as though they set his teeth on edge, but would have told you that

he never did get on with children. Ronald fidgeted with his tie, and thought the little beggars looked as though a romp in the sun would do them good. The Matron beamed, frowned as a daring spirit among them coughed, then beamed again.

Only Corinna gave them back look for look, a steady, indifferent stare, chin well up, so that they ceased to blink, and gazed in round-eyed wonder at such perfection of loveliness.

There were speeches, reports were read, the girls sang a decorous song with great efficiency and no effect, and at last the proceedings were over.

Ronald, tucking Corinna in the car, asked her where she would like to go for tea—they had escaped from the ordeal of tea in the Matron's room.

Corinna chose the Piccadero, and in the Haymarket Ronald drew up before a tobacconist's.

Corinna wondered why he was making such a fuss about buying himself fifty cigarettes. He was chuckling over it, and murmuring that somebody else would have to stump up for them. For one wild moment she speculated as to whether he was not so rich, after all.

He dived into the shop and dashed out again like a happy school-boy. "A penny for your thoughts!" he said gaily, leaning over and gazing into Corinna's pensive face.

"I was thinking," she said promptly, "what horribly ugly dresses those kids have to wear!"

They didn't go straight to the Piccadero. "Where are we off to now?" Corinna asked.

"Being a man of honour," Ronald answered, "I'm going to buy a dance record before we have tea."

\* \* \* \* \*

And now we really come to the wedding gown, that garment that was to be a miracle of white loveliness. Corinna could think of nothing else, and one day she ventured to speak of it to Ronald.

Ronald listened very patiently, and tried to forget that in his pocket was the special licence that was to have freed them from any formality and made it possible for them to run away and be married in the country on the first fine day that the will took them and the wind blew warm from the south.

Corinna's plans sounded rather like a paragraph out of a society journal, but Corinna, sitting in a high-backed oak chair, was as pretty as a picture, and Ronald felt

that he would be a cad to rob her of her wedding gown.

So he pulled out his cheque book and told her, with much nonsensical embroidery, that she should have a wedding gown fit for a princess, and how much did she think it would cost?

Eventually the cheque was written for two hundred pounds, and as Corinna folded it and put it in her bag, she glimpsed, for a fleeting moment, Ronald's side of the bargain. "Am I everything you want me to be?" she queried.

And Ronald was unconscious of hedging when he answered: "Yes, if you are happy."

Corinna didn't know why she suddenly thought of Mr. Harper. These people with money and position, two of the things she most coveted in the world, had a curious selfless simplicity. She dropped a butterfly kiss on Ronald's head as he sat at the writing table, and surprised herself and put him in the seventh heaven by saying:

"That isn't because of the cheque—it's because of you."

Spring, making up for her tardy appearance, suddenly burst forth in a welter of sunshine and blossom and perfumed wind. Even Corinna fell a-dreaming, and one day she announced to Ronald that she was going to let the orphanage girls make her wedding gown. They had seen some beautiful needlework on the Governors' Day, and she considered they were quite capable of doing justice to the wonderful creation that her gown was to be.

Ronald thought it was a splendid idea, and made a point of motoring down to tell Phyllis about it.

Phyllis was so scornful about the cheque—she had wormed that information out of him—that she couldn't consider the idea without bias.

He came back to Town rather crestfallen. Personally he thought it was a sweet idea, and Phyllis ought to have agreed with him.

After that Corinna was for ever asking him to run her over to the orphanage. She would spend interminable half-hours inside, and then come out flushed and excited, and talk nothing but the dress. If he hadn't loved Corinna so much, he would have finished up by hating Corinna's wedding gown.

At last the day came when she announced that it was finished. She told him when they were dining in—for Corinna's choice—an unusually quiet restaurant.

"And I've promised the girls that you and Mr. Harper and Mr. Boland will come and see it, and I thought perhaps Phyllis and your aunt would come, too."

Once again Ronald thought it was a splendid idea, and he fervently hoped that Phyl and Auntie would be sports and come up. Corinna was looking adorable to-night. She was very simply dressed in navy blue, and somehow, in spite of her height, she looked such a *little* girl. Her eyes were bright, and she forgot to keep her mouth shut, so that she had the appearance of an eager child. It was worth giving in to her about the gown to have her as sweet as this. She had left Harpers' and had promised to settle the date of their wedding that week. He was deliriously happy.

And on a brilliant spring day his aunt and Phyllis came up to Town to see the dress. They put up at an hotel, as it was arranged that they should join Corinna and Ronald at a show that night.

Ronald motored them out to the Home, feeling that this was the only tiresome spot in a day that was to be sheer bliss, for it was to be spent with the three people that he cared for most.

He felt happier after he had witnessed the friendly greeting between Corinna and the Matron. *That* ought to show Phyllis.

Once more they were all conducted to the platform under the high window. The girls, it appeared, were to be allowed to bring the gown in themselves.

The Matron had arranged the chairs with cunning, so that Corinna and Ronald occupied the centre of the platform. One felt that, had she had her way, a wedding bell in white flowers would have been suspended over their heads.

Scufflings and suppressed gigglings came from behind the door. The sun lay in golden pools on the polished floor. Suddenly the Matron clapped her hands and the door flew open.

In they poured—no decorous two by two—a laughing, dancing crowd of little girls clad in the softest little gowns of brown, brown shoes and stockings, little red belts and big flaunting red bows on their bobbed heads, and following them the older girls in green dresses, with brown shoes and stockings and brown bows.

And they lined up, the little ones in front of the big ones, looking for all the world like perky little robins in a green wood.

Ronald was the first to find his voice.

"And where is the gown these woodland elves have made?" he asked.

The Matron answered him promptly and without servility.

"This is it!" she cried, on a high note of excitement. "Isn't it a perfectly lovely idea of Miss Froome's? She consulted Mr. Harper and Mr. Boland and me about it, and the money for her wedding dress went towards this." She waved her hand at the girls. "Thick brown coats for the winter, too, and another thicker pair of shoes each."

Mr. Boland, thin, bachelor Mr. Boland, who, in the normal course of things, would have given half a year's income to avoid being left alone with a child, beamed on them all with the loving pride of a world of fathers.

He leant across to Ronald.

"Very irregular," he boomed, "to have allowed such an innovation without calling a board meeting, but Mr. Harper and I ventured, in consultation with the Matron, to act on our own initiative in view of the er—er—the very exceptional circumstances."

"I certainly agreed," old Mr. Harper said, "but I had no idea that the girls—*our* girls—were such jolly-looking little youngsters."

"I think," the Matron put in, "the girls want to show Miss Froome how grateful they are."

She raised her hand, and the little robins in the green wood all lifted up their voices and sang "For she's a jolly good fellow."

Fat Mr. Harper joined them in a thin, sweet tenor, and thin Mr. Boland joined them in a deep, tuneless bass. Auntie sang quaveringly as though she were in church, and Phyllis came in spasmodically, obviously doing battle with her better self.

But Ronald never opened his mouth. He was so white that Corinna wanted to hold him tight. She held up her hand to stop the ringing cheers and cries for "Speech!" that followed.

"I'm glad you're pleased," she said. "And now I've a confession to make." She felt for Ronald's hand and gripped it hard under cover of the table. "I used to be a little girl at this orphanage, and I hated the thick dress and the thick stockings and the thick boots so much that I ran away. And when I had run away I found that I didn't know enough of anything to earn my living. So the fairies punished me by making me wear pretty frocks all day and every day. There isn't any reason now for

you to run away, is there? You look ever so nice, so it's up to you to *be* nice."

Which wasn't at all the sort of speech the girls were accustomed to hear from that platform, so they cheered again, and then stampeded and were round Corinna in a swirling, twittering mass.

"Girls, girls," cried the Matron, "leave Miss Froome alone!"

Corinna touched as many little robins as she could with her two hands. She looked at Ronald over their heads, and his eyes

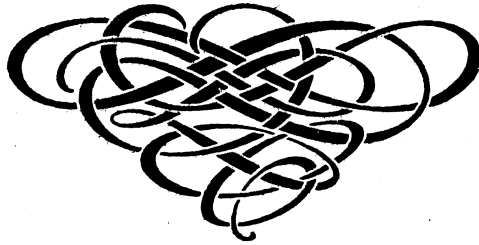
told her that she had made him truly happy at last.

"Where should my wedding gown be but round me?" she asked, laughing softly.

\* \* \* \* \*

A day or so later Corinna emerged from Little Setton Church, Ronald's wife, in a simple little suit of tweed—nothing at all to make a story about.

But that, you understand, was not Corinna's wedding gown.



## THE NEW DOG.

**T**HERE'S a new dog lies on the parlour rug where the old dog used to lie,  
A dog with a short, white curly coat and a brown patch over his eye.  
He takes his meals from the old dog's plate and sleeps on the old dog's chair,  
And the rest have forgotten the Aberdeen who for ten sweet years slept there.

But at night, when the house is fast asleep, sounds a step I used to know,  
As the dog that I love comes stealing back from the Land Where the Good Dogs Go,  
A dark shape opens the bedroom door, I hear a familiar whine—  
There are two black paws on the counterpane and a dog's head close to mine.

It's a wonderful world where he finds himself, and the dog who lived next door  
Still chases his balls and shares his bones, just as they did before.  
And instead of the pavements he used to loathe there are fields where the grass  
grows sweet,  
But somehow he misses a strange brown stone he used to lay at my feet.

He remembers the deer in Richmond Park and the cats he loved to chase—  
(And yet they can talk of another dog who shall take the old dog's place!)  
He tells me he's looked for the worn green chair where his basket used to be,  
But he found an intruder sleeping there, so he came to search for me.

Oh, the new white dog is a faithful chap, and he earns his daily bread,  
And the right to feed from the self-same dish and sleep on the self-same bed,  
And of course he must lie on the parlour rug where the old Jock used to lie—  
But a black dog visits me every night, pathetically asking why!

LUCY MALLESON.

# “NERVES” IN GOLF

## DELIBERATION THE SURE AND SIMPLE CURE

By SANDY HERD

*In a Chat with Clyde Foster*

WRITING of me recently, J. H. Taylor said that the reason why I lasted so well at my age was that I enjoyed golf to-day as much as I did when a boy. Taylor was quite right when he said this, except that he might have gone a little further and added that perhaps to-day, when I need it to keep me well, I enjoyed golf more than ever.

Taylor is only three or four years younger than I am, and he proved, by his recent display in the Open Championship, that he lasts equally well. I suppose the records of the game would be searched in vain for a parallel to Taylor's golf at Hoylake on the part of a competitor about midway in the fifties.

To the superficial observer it might appear that Taylor takes his game too seriously actually to enjoy it; but that would be a very wrong conclusion to draw from the resolute expression on his face and the silent manner in which he plays his rounds.

An amateur told me, only the other day, that on a certain important occasion he and two friends were desirous of following Taylor round. They asked him whether he would have any objection, and he frankly replied: "None in the least, but please do not talk to me, and do not talk so loudly to one another that I might hear you." The bargain was struck, of course, as it was not the intention of these intelligent gentlemen to interrupt a professional golfer contending for a big prize.

The professional has a better excuse than the amateur for playing golf rather grimly. I am referring, of course, to competitions. You must have noticed the boyish delight professionals manifest when engaged in playing exhibition matches, in the sheer pleasure of release from tension.

More than once men and women have approached me, almost like patients consulting a specialist, in quest of a cure for "nerves" when playing competitions. I have told them that very likely competitions were becoming too frequent, and they have agreed with me, while admitting that they never could resist the temptation of taking part in competitions, despite the fact that they did not enjoy them, simply because an attack of "nerves" was certain to play havoc with their game.

A round of golf does nobody very much good—certainly not half as much good as should be derived from it—when it is played in a sort of fever of excitement. I once heard a man confess that he was afraid he might have to give up golf altogether unless he could overcome, or, better still, prevent, the acute self-consciousness and nervousness from which he suffered. He said the game had far more joy for him when he used to play from a very long handicap with men who played no better than he did, laughing and joking all the way round.

If I may speak from my own experience—and fifty years of golf should have taught me something—I would suggest that the best specific for curing this nervy malady is to study the game so intently that you have no time to think about yourself. Unquestionably your best card will be returned—and so will mine—when every shot is enjoyed and the whole outing, whether you win or lose, constitutes a succession of pleasant experiences.

But, you say, how can a man enjoy a game of golf when he plays very much below his best form? In such circumstances one cannot derive so much pleasure; but by going on cheerfully from the first to the eighteenth tee, it will generally be found that one has played some very good golf,

to say nothing of the physical and mental benefit derived from the healthiest game in the world.

The man who plays golf to keep fit does a wise thing, but the man who keeps fit to play golf does a still wiser thing from the point of view of enjoying the game. The Americans lay great stress upon this. They appear to be always in training for whatever game they are specially interested in. I do not mean that they train in any special manner, but they take very few liberties with their health, always bearing in mind that the fitter they feel, the better they will play.

They do not live for golf, but they love it, and they like to give themselves every chance of excelling at it. It is a curious fact that one hears far more about "nerves" in golf over here than over there. I always think the American reasons out for himself that he cannot do anything well unless he has enjoyed it, and that the more he enjoys it, the better he will do it.

Contrast this with a statement made to me by an eight handicap man at the close of a competition, in which he had not played well, that he was probably as much the worse for the game as he ought to have been the better for it. Why an amateur, who does not play golf for a living, should worry himself, and talk about breaking his clubs over his knee, passes my understanding. He has nothing else to think about but the fun of the game and the good he should derive from playing it. I am not speaking of ambitious young players who aspire to distinction, either in their own clubs or in the more important amateur events, and yet even these are only handicapping themselves when they get high temperatures, so to speak.

There was one particular occasion in my life when I had a pretty bad attack of "nerves." That, however, was not while I was playing, but after I had finished. It was at Hoylake in the year 1902. Vardon and Braid were finishing close behind me, and I was rather like a hen on a hot girdle as I waited to learn my fate, for this was the occasion of my first and only Open Championship—the winning of it, I mean. Both these great players had long putts to tie with me, and both of them missed. There was some excuse for "nerves" in my case, as my fortunes wavered in the balance. My attack was cured when I saw first Braid's ball and then Vardon's glance past the side of the hole. There were other competitors

to follow, but I apprehended no danger from them.

I have the reputation of being the most deliberate golfer in professional ranks. I suppose this is not very wide of the mark. My waggling habit is quoted in evidence of the care I take with every shot, especially with tee shots. Well, it was not always so with me. When a young man I was rebuked by an old caddie for taking too little pains with all my shots. From that day I changed my style and gradually drifted to the other extreme—of taking what may appear to some to be too much pains.

One great effect of deliberation is that it averts self-consciousness. With every waggle of the club one seems to get away from oneself and to be paying due respect to the game. The only time I ever felt particularly self-conscious, while addressing a ball on the tee, was when I overheard a lady say to her friend: "That's nine." She was referring to the number of waggles I had made with the driver. I don't remember what kind of a shot I had, but I remember laughing as I made it, so that it was possibly quite a good shot. Anyhow, it was sure to be a better shot than if I had been swearing when I made it.

Some time ago I watched two leading amateurs playing. One was a veteran, and the other a brilliant young player. The latter took the lead at the first hole, and held it quite comfortably without increasing it, till the turn was reached. All the way he had been making occasional jocular remarks, and I was struck by the deep musical tones of his voice.

At the tenth hole the older player squared. He mentioned to the other that his putting had been positively phenomenal. So it had been up to that point. Whether the compliment had any effect on him, I can't say, but the only remarkable thing about the youth's putting afterwards was that it contrasted very unfavourably with his putting during the first nine holes.

The veteran player steadily wore him down by sheer deliberation and a complete absence of anything approximating to nervousness. The younger player lost all his joviality, and I could not but note how the change in his mood had affected the tones of his voice. I knew then that the youth had a stiffish task before him in adapting his temperament to the requirements of great occasions, for I was aware that his friends fancied him for the Amateur Championship some day.



Photo by]

SANDY HERD PLAYING FOR A PULL.

[The Daily Mail.

One shot at a time is a good rule to bear in mind. In other words, let each shot be played as if it were the last, or, at any rate, the one shot on which everything depended. The golfer will soon rid himself of nervousness if he settles down to the game in this way.

Moreover, by deliberating intently, good shots will be sure to come. None of us are very liable to "nerves" so long as we keep on playing well. I think you will agree with me that it is tremendously desirable to play golf well, not necessarily as brilliantly as a Duncan or a Mitchell, but to play as well as a man or a woman feels that he or she ought to play.

Deliberation serves other purposes as well. Yes, it holds up the field by being too slow, you may say. But deliberation is not slow. It is the quickest method of playing golf, because it keeps the generality of players from wandering into the rough and losing time and tempers searching for balls.

How often after a bad shot is played one hears a remark like this: "I thought as much. I really ought never to have played. I was not comfortable, but I could not take the trouble to put myself right. And now

just look where the ball has gone—into the tiger country and no mistake!"

It may not be necessary for everyone to deliberate as much as I do, but I still think that a small leaf out of my book might be found useful to average amateurs, and especially to those who play their worst golf when they want to play their best, namely, in competitions. Why is it that a man will play a remarkably good round on a Friday evening and then take part in a competition the next day in fear and trembling, and completely disappoint all his hopes?

There can be no other reason than that he has failed to produce his best golf for lack of deliberation. Instead of settling calmly down to play the game, to let no shot go till he feels thoroughly confident about it, and to think of nothing that has gone before and nothing that lies ahead while he is standing over the ball, he is very likely succumbing to the "jumps."

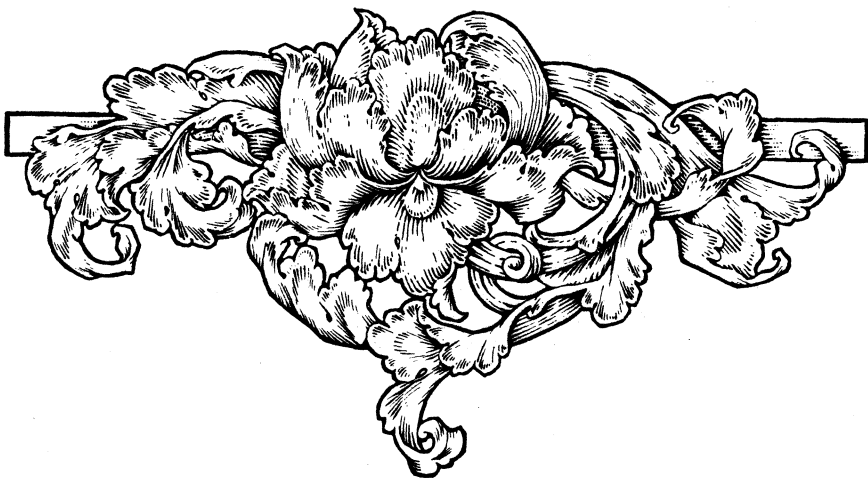
Perhaps he has already been telling his partner of the great game he played last night, and how he cannot understand why it is that as soon as he takes out a card, his golf goes to pieces. Now, this sort of man



is thinking far too much about himself. He may be the best-natured fellow in the world, but he will never make any headway at golf until he turns his thoughts away from himself to the game. There will be time enough for personal reminiscences when the round is finished.

The great thing I have in mind in this article is to get golfers of all classes to do

justice to themselves and the game, which is just about the greatest blessing that has ever come to the workers of the world in the way of physical and mental recreation. But don't let it worry you. Get all the good you can out of it, and don't let it take anything out of you. That would be, as an old St. Andrews caddie used to say, "stuff and nonsense."



## HOUSEWIFE.

**W**HEN I first loved you, and my dreaming eyes  
Saw glamour lying golden in your hand,  
You showed me the four keys of Paradise,  
And the thin ferny path to fairyland.

And now I live with you, and bake your bread,  
And the dawn colours settle into day,  
You ask me sadly is the glamour fled,  
Or can a housewife find the secret way?

But all the time I wash your clothes my thought  
Rides a white palfrey in a fairy ring,  
And when I dish you porridge from the pot  
You ride to meet me through the flowering spring.

GAMEL WOOLSEY.

# THE OLD LOVE

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK WILES

HENRY AUGUSTUS BRADLEY had reached his seventeenth year without having felt the darts of the little god of Love. His deepest feelings so far had been centred in his motor-cycle—a noisy and somewhat erratic affair of the cheaper variety—whose defective silencer caused his near neighbours the expenditure of much breath and ingenuity in the effort to convey adequately their opinion of it. But Henry Augustus Bradley cared for none of these things. She—motor-cycles are of the feminine gender—was the object of his dreams and his one and only love. Her frequent breakdowns, for no apparent reason, her sudden skids and backstarts and little leaps, were only part of her beloved caprice. Henry Augustus Bradley toiled many weary miles, pushing her along country lanes to the nearest garage, his back bent double, his brow bedewed with honest sweat, and felt no grudge against her in his heart. His love was proof against all her failings. He maintained a proud and haughty silence when his father's next-door neighbour—a man with no conception of romance—gave his frank and unbiassed opinion of her over the fence. Henry himself was at heart a romantic of the deepest dye. He had even given her a name, though it never passed his lips except in a furtive whisper when he was examining her inner parts to see if he could account for her unaccountable actions, or in some other intimate relationship with her. He would rather have died in torture than have breathed her name in the presence of his uncomprehending fellow-mortals. Her name was Rosamund.

But in his seventeenth year he came up against the greatest force of destiny. It happened one day when he was walking Rosamund up a hill. Rosamund had an incurable objection to hills. At the foot of a hill she generally made certain curious rumblings in her inside, and then all power of movement seemed to die away, and Rosamund was content to form a stationary object of the landscape.

Henry was toiling up the hill with her in a state of moist heat when he saw a girlish figure in white descending it. It looked like Gladys Philips in the distance. A familiar panic overcame him. Few tortures were more painful to him than meeting girls he knew on a long and solitary road. At what point exactly should he smile and raise his hat? His expression on such occasions could not be mastered. It became more and more self-conscious as the moment came nearer, and he looked round furtively at anything but the approaching figure. If he made the mistake of letting his eyes rest upon it too soon, he was fixed with a ghastly smile and a raised hat for an agonising length of time until the figure had made its self-possessed salutation (all girls are self-possessed) and passed on. If he waited till he was just abreast of it, the few moments before he came abreast were so unutterably painful. . . . He often thought how easy life must be in a place where no one knew anyone.

Moreover, he was sorry that he was wheeling Rosamund. He seemed always to be wheeling Rosamund when he met anyone he knew. It gave them a wrong idea of her. And that hurt him because he loved her so. He passed through all the familiar stages of misery and embarrassment, keeping his eyes fixed upon the sky or the hedge at the extreme left of him till the figure was almost abreast. Then he affected to see it for the first time, raised his hand to his hat, and smiled his mirthless smile of restrained pleasure at the meeting. At this point his face, already pink, became suffused with purple. His smile faded away abruptly, and, nervously clearing his throat, he looked hastily at the surrounding landscape, the picture of misery. For it was no one he knew. Horrors! It was no one he knew! Oh, Heavens! He had smiled and nearly taken off his hat, and it was no one he knew. What must she think of him? His spirits wallowed in the lowest depths of shame. What must she think of him? He had caught a glimpse of a white dress and above

it a dimpled face with dark eyes and wavy hair under a broad-brimmed hat. Oh, ye gods, what must she think of him? He turned round, then quickly turned back again. She also had turned round. Again he had seen that adorable face. He experienced a quivering sensation at the back of his knees.

"By Jove!" he said out loud.

It seemed but a feeble expression of his feelings. He sought a deeper.

"Good Heavens!" he ejaculated, then coughed as if to unsay it. He must not be profane. He was sure she wouldn't like profanity. He must be all that was upright and good and noble for the rest of his life—even if he never met her again. He would never marry, of course, in that case. People would wonder why, but he wouldn't tell them. It would be his secret. He looked down at Rosamund and saw her suddenly as a mere mechanical motorcycle without a soul.

He was in love.

\* \* \*

At supper that evening he sat silent, consuming beef with his usual appetite, it must be owned, but with his mind far above such things. His thoughts were wandering in a rosy land of dreams. Formerly in his most rapt moments they had wandered with Rosamund as their comrade, and Rosamund flew with him like a winged bird over mountain and valley and along straight, delightful roads. In real life, it must be confessed, Rosamund's method of locomotion did not resemble those of winged birds. But to-night Rosamund had no place in his thoughts. He was rescuing a graceful, dark-eyed, beautiful girl from incredible dangers—from robber chieftains, from surging floods, from savage cannibals, from onrushing trains and motor-cars. In his dreams the whole forces of Nature seemed bent upon the extermination of the graceful, dark-eyed, beautiful girl, and he alone prevented it. The conclusion of all the scenes was curiously similar. After the hairbreadth escape, the graceful, dark-eyed,

beautiful girl flung herself into his arms and murmured "My rescuer!" His arms closed about her, and he pressed his lips against her hair. That was as far as he got. Further conversation or action was beyond him. When he got there he always stopped and began the next



"He was in love."

adventure. His heart was so full that he swallowed half a potato by mistake and nearly choked. After a gulp of water, with tears of emotion still in his eyes, he began to listen idly to the futile conversation of the rest of his family. How sordid they were! What did they know of romance and adventure, and rescuing graceful, dark-eyed, beautiful girls? He

laughed scornfully to himself. Nothing. His sister Florence was talking.

"Gladys Phillips has got a cousin staying with her," she said. "Such a pretty girl! She came down to the Swanleys' when I was there this evening."

The Swanleys lived at the bottom of the hill. Good Heavens! Was it? Could it be? His face flamed crimson at the thought.

"Hello," said his father jocularly, "what's the matter with Augustus?"

Henry shivered slightly. His father, with the coarse and distorted sense of humour common to male parents generally, considered his second name a joke. Henry himself blushed for shame at the very thought of it. Horrors! Suppose she ever got to know that he was called Augustus!

"I've asked her to tea to-morrow with Gladys," went on his sister.

His heart began to beat unevenly. She was coming! He would see her. He might yet win her. He saw himself again, in imagination, rescuing her from the horns of the cow in the field through which she would have to reach his house. It had been a pretty peaceful cow so far, but one never knew with cows. It might go mad suddenly. Cows did sometimes. He'd keep a look-out, anyway. He saw himself vaulting lightly over the fence, picking up her unconscious form—she'd probably faint—in the nick of time, leaping aside from the rush of the infuriated cow, and running back like a flash with her unconscious form in his arms. Once over the fence she would revive and fling her arms round his neck. "My rescuer!" she would murmur. He was roused by his father's voice.

"How did the bike go this afternoon? Or, rather, did she go at all?"

His love for Rosamund was a thing of the past, yet he could not have her publicly scorned.

"Splendidly," he said coldly.

\* \* \* \* \*

He spent two hours and a half dressing for the visitor. His struggle with his suit was Homeric, and, considering that he possessed only three, of almost incredible duration. He began by putting on the brown suit, then, after a long and painful survey of himself in the glass, he decided—horrible thought!—that he looked vulgar. With frenzied fingers he tore it off and put on his white flannels. Again he surveyed himself with tense, frowning face in the glass. He looked too young—not manly enough, not the sort of figure to confront a

raging robber chief or cow with stern dignity. With set face he tore off the flannel suit and put on his blue serge. That, he decided, looked better. Then a terrible thought struck him. Suppose that the girl he'd seen wasn't Gladys's cousin! Good Heavens! His whole future life blighted! Drops of perspiration stood out on his brow at the thought. But Fate could not be so cruel as that. He wrenched his thoughts from the dreadful prospect and forced them to face the problem of his tie. He tried a brown tie and a green tie, and a mauve tie and a blue tie, and finally decided on the blue one because it matched his suit and his eyes. Then once more he considered himself. Yes, on the whole, he thought he would do. He was not handsome, of course, —reluctantly he admitted that—but his general appearance in the blue suit and the blue tie was, he considered, quiet and tasteful and gentlemanly. He looked out of his window. A white-clad form was coming across the field to the garden gate. *It was* the girl. His beating heart sang pæans of praise. *It was* the girl. He watched her walk past the cow. The cow raised limpid eyes and munched peacefully as she passed. Henry gave a short ironic laugh. Always trust a cow to let you down! He waited with a frown of fierce determination till the sound of the greetings in the hall had died away and the drawing-room door had shut. Then he went down the stairs. Outside the drawing-room he stopped to pull up his socks, straighten his tie, and smooth back his hair. As a matter of fact, his hair was too much cowed by grease and brushing to have any spirit for resistance left. It lay inert and beaten beneath Henry's hand. Then he composed his features and entered the drawing-room.

The other occupants saw a plain youth, with a curious expression of settled melancholy and a very awkward manner, shake hands with the visitors, and bare his teeth in what was evidently meant to be a smile of welcome. Henry saw the young hero, pale and composed, advance to meet the lady of his dreams, ready to leap at any moment to do mortal combat with her enemies. He was sure, from her face, that she saw that, too.

\* \* \* \* \*

He took her round the garden after tea.

"It was you I saw on the road yesterday, wasn't it?" she said.

His heart gave a leap. She had noticed him. Oh, Heavens, she had noticed him!

She had seen in him her fated hero as he had seen in her his—well, it was rather involved when put into words, but, anyway, she had noticed him.

"It was," he said in low tones.

"Pushing up that old bike."

He felt no sting of anger at that allusion to his Rosamund. Oh, the fickleness of human nature!

"Yes," he said, with a meaning look. "I—er—I could"—he blushed at his daring—"that is to say, if you care for that sort of thing—that is—I could take you for a spin—if you like, that is——" He ended in embarrassment.

A painful silence fell between them. It was more difficult talking to one's heart's beloved than he could have thought. He stole a look at her. Heavens, how beautiful she was! He wished he could think of something to say to her. He couldn't propose yet. He didn't know her well enough. Probably she thought him just an ordinary young man. She didn't know about the hair-breadth escapes. He was desperately anxious to impress her. All



"It didn't look as if it span much," she said scornfully.

"Rotten thing," he agreed hastily.

"He . . . ran his fingers once more through his hair, then turned on his heel and strode down the path."

he could find to say was:  
"These are the roses."

"I thought so," she answered.

Heavens! His brow felt moist. How did one get on to talking deep and serious and

earnest things, such as one must talk with one's heart's beloved ?

"Those are tomatoes in the greenhouse," he said desperately.

small expression—that is to say"—he tried painfully to extricate the sentence—"well, of the—er—deepness of my feelings for



"'Is your brother—peculiar at all?' she said."

you?" He coughed nervously as he finished.

She gaped at him.

"My word!" she said.

Dramatically he tore a red rose from a rose tree near, emitting a sharp exclamation of

pain as a thorn pierced his finger.

"Have you hurt yourself?" she said sympathetically.

He assumed an expression of patient suffering. "Nothing to speak of," he murmured, enveloping his finger in a voluminous handkerchief. "That is to say, it will probably heal soon, though it pierced very deep."

"I'm so sorry!"

Oh, her womanly sympathy! He wished the thorn had completely severed his thumb

"They look like tomatoes," she agreed.

It was awful! And suppose he never got the chance of rescuing her! Suppose he lost his chance, and some other man won her, and all his life was blighted! It was a ghastly thought—almost unbearable. His hair, disturbed doubtless by the agonised turmoil taking place beneath it, recovered from the effects of the grease and began to rise. His expression was distraught. He had a brilliant idea. "Miss Phillips," he said, "may I—er—offer you—that is—a very

from the rest of his hand, or maimed him for life in some terrible way, that he might have had more of it.

"It's still painful," he admitted with seeming reluctance.

"I *am* sorry."

Oh, heavenly!

"Often these thorn pricks are poisonous," he said, but she was tired of the thorn.

"I prefer white roses really," she said.

He looked round the garden. Not a white rose in sight. He ran his fingers distractedly through his hair.

"Good Heavens!" he said. "I'll get you some! I'll find you some—that is to say, I'll always get the white ones in future!"

"Always? But I'm going next week."

"Ah!" he said. He fixed his eyes upon her meaningly, then, meeting her gaze, blushed and looked away. "Ah!" She must know now—know that he had made up his mind to win her. But it had been a bit tame so far. Dangers seemed so few and far between. It was difficult to get on really familiar terms with someone you'd never saved. He sighed.

"I suppose," she said suddenly, "you don't happen to have a Chinese stamp?"

He started.

"Er—no. Do you want one?"

"Yes."

"I'll get one for you," he said in grim determination. Here at last was something he could do for her. One might be able to risk one's life getting a Chinese stamp. One could try, anyway.

She turned her clear gaze upon him gratefully. "Thanks so much," she said.

The rapture almost intoxicated him. He burst into a confused speech.

"I'd not mind doing anything—going into any sort of awful danger—that is to say—even this afternoon—if that cow—ever since the first moment I saw you—if you'd known—I knew at once—stamps are nothing—nothing—I don't mind what I do—that is to say—the more danger the better—I'll never forget white ones—if it was a case of wild animals or Indians or anything—I haven't enough money yet, I know, and"—he saw his sister coming down the path, and went on desperately—"my allowance is hardly enough for me as it is—but in time—and no danger is too great—" He broke off, partly for want of breath, partly because Florence had come up. He glared at her wildly, ran his fingers once more through his hair, then turned on his heel and strode down the path.

The visitor gazed after him. "Is your brother—peculiar at all?" she said.

"No more than boys usually are," said Florence carelessly. "Why?"

"He's just been going on at me like anything."

"What about?"

"I don't know."

"Perhaps you'd been running down his motor-bike."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Do you," said Henry to his father, "know anything about Chinese stamps?"

"I do not, Augustus," replied his father from behind a newspaper.

Henry chose to ignore the insult. "Well, have you any Chinese stamps?"

"I have not—that is, not here. I suppose there may be some at the office. Why? Starting a collection?"

"I'll go and look for some at the office."

"That you will *not*, Augustus. I know the chaos that means. Ring up old Freeman, if you like—he'll be there."

Henry went out without answering. A few minutes later he returned pale and distraught.

"Hundreds of Japanese, he says, but no Chinese."

"Well, try Japanese."

"They *must* be Chinese. She *said* Chinese."

"Who's 'she'? The bike?"

Henry emitted a short scornful laugh.

"I must find a Chinese stamp," he said simply, "if it costs me my life."

"Really?" said his father politely.

"Well, try old Crayshaw up the road. He's got a brother in China, and presumably he hears from him, and presumably the letters are stamped."

"I don't know him."

"Neither do I, but I know he's got a brother in China. He lives with his sister in that white house on the hill. I hope it won't cost you your life, but I suppose one never knows. Good-bye, Augustus. Shut the door after you. It's rather draughty."

Henry went out grimly. He was on the track. Adventure lay before him. He passed the shed where Rosamund lay, patient and despised. He had not cleaned her, he had not looked at her, since he met his goddess. Now he merely threw her a scornful glance as he passed.

He reached the white house on the hill. It seemed not only embarrassing, but rather dull to ring the front door bell and demand a Chinese stamp. No risk—no danger—no

adventure. It could hardly be called *doing* anything for her. Compared with the struggle with overpowering numbers of robbers and savages, it seemed almost ludicrous to go up to a front door and demand a Chinese stamp. It was too simple. Moreover, it could not be denied that it *was* somewhat embarrassing. He walked up the garden path to a side-door. The side-door was open. An idea struck him. To *steal* a Chinese stamp would be risk and danger all right. His expression became set and stern and sinister. He crept into the passage. No one seemed to be about. He entered cautiously a room on his right. It seemed to be a kind of study. There was a desk littered with envelopes and letters. He went up to it furtively and began to turn them over. Nothing Chinese. He went out again into the passage. At the foot of the stairs he heard a door opening in what must be the kitchen regions. In sudden panic he ran quickly up the stairs. He began to feel rather apprehensive, but what a deed of daring to lay at the feet of the beloved! Hearing steps coming along the hall, he took refuge hastily in the first room he could see. It was a bedroom. There was a letter on the dressing-table—a Chinese stamp. With trembling hands he tore off the front part of the envelope. Footsteps were coming up the stairs towards the room. Precipitately he plunged beneath the bed, holding the stamp in his hand. His heart was beating wildly. Whatever happened now, he had *done* it—a deed of glorious risk and daring. He'd have to confess to her that one of his names was Augustus, of course, but she might not mind, and after that his road lay clear. . .

Someone—he could not see whom—entered the room and shut the door. Heavens! It was rather awkward. Then he heard a little gasp and a little rush to the door. Then a shrill feminine voice: "John, come quickly! There's a man under the bed! I can see his bootlaces."

Bother his bootlaces! They were always coming untied. But—*man*! That was balm to a soul continually tortured, even in its seventeenth year, by being referred to as "boy." She could see he was a man just by his bootlaces. Anyway, he'd *done* it. Even if they hung him or put him in prison for life, he'd *done* it! He'd got the Chinese stamp for her. He held it firmly in his grasp. Heavy footsteps were coming up the stairs. He felt both his feet held firmly and his person drawn ungentle

from under the bed. In order to assist his progress with his hands, he transferred his stamp to his mouth. He emerged into the light of day. Looking round, he saw that an old gentleman was firmly holding one leg and the old lady the other. They seemed to have no intention of letting go. Supporting himself on his hands, he looked round at them desperately. It would be pretty awful for his family if he was imprisoned.

"I can explain everything," he began dramatically but inaudibly through his teeth and the stamp.

"You young villain!" roared the old gentleman.

"It's that boy who goes about on that dreadful machine," said the old lady.

Henry glared at her. Boy! The insult to Rosamund he hardly noticed. Then he freed his feet with a desperate movement and stood up, smoothing back his hair.

"I can explain everything. I'm not a thief—not an ordinary thief." The old gentleman was feeling in all his pockets. "I only wanted a Chinese stamp. It was a question of all my life being involved—that is to say—you wouldn't understand—"

"He's mad," said the old gentleman, having satisfied himself that Henry's pockets were empty, and escorting him from the room by his collar.

"I'm not mad," said Henry. "I'm trying to explain. She said it *had* to be Chinese. I don't know why any more than you. Would you mind taking your fingers out of my neck? They're tickling me. Say, would you mind taking your fingers out of my —"

There was a slight scuffle on the landing, at the end of which Henry rolled ignominiously downstairs. He picked himself up at the bottom. He was dusty and dishevelled, his tie was half-way round his neck, but his captor was not pursuing him.

"Stark mad!" he heard from the landing.

Still holding the Chinese stamp in a vice-like grip, Henry ran down the path, out of the gate and down the road. He was a curious object. He had left his hat under the bed. His hair looked startled by the whole proceeding. But he had *done* it—he had *got* it—he had *won* her!

He went towards the Phillips' house. He must find her at once. He must lay his heart at her feet. To think that two days ago he had not known her, had thought of nothing but that wretched motor-cycle!



He gave a superior smile at the thought. What a boy he had been! How much older and more manly he felt now! Heavens! There she was coming out of the gate, all in white!

He approached her and held out the stamp.

"I say," she said, looking at him in horror, "what *have* you been doing?"

"I've got it for you," he said simply.

"What?"

"The Chinese stamp."

She took it. She still looked bewildered.

"Did I ask you for a Chinese stamp?" she asked.

His voice seemed to die away. He nodded dumbly.

"How silly! I meant a Japanese one. My *fiancé* wants it. He collects them."

He stared at her in silence. She had a *fiancé*! He'd risked his life for her *fiancé*! She was another's. She wasn't as pretty as he'd thought she was, after all. She was a bit fat. He preferred fair girls, on the whole, too, though all girls were rather silly.

He put up a hand to his hat, found it was not there, bowed distantly and set off down the road without a word.

He went in by the side-gate of the house and round to the shed. There he took a duster from a peg on the wall and began to rub the handle-bars of his motor-cycle.

"Rosamund!" he murmured tenderly.



## DREAMS.

**D**REAMING o' nights I listen  
To fiddle and dance and song,  
While the stars of the trade skies glisten  
Down roads where I belong.

There's Pete and big Yohansen,  
There's Neilson and Hans and Joe,  
And the sailmaker is dancing  
And stamping heel and toe.

Louder the fiddle's playing,  
And faster the dancer sways,  
And, smiling, the mate is saying:  
"Port in a hundred days."

"Five more months o' sailing,  
An' then we'll walk ashore."  
Hark to the fiddles wailing—  
'Twas only a dream once more!

BILL ADAMS.



TALL TALK.

HE (concluding fishing yarn): When I had at last hooked him out, I found he was as long as—er—that drive of yours from the fourteenth this morning.

SHE (flattered): Oh, I say, really?

HE: Yes, 'pon my word—so I threw him back.

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### CLEVER FOOLS.

*By E. S. J. Darmady.*

UNCLE PAUL is our mother's uncle, but you can't call people grand-uncle. Some you might call gruncle, but Uncle Paul is not that kind. He is supposed to be tremendously clever, and when you write to him you have to put F.R. and some other silly letters after his name. Where his cleverness comes in, neither George (that is my brother) nor I (that is Mary) can make out. He appears to us extraordinarily stupid.

Every year we have to spend part of the holidays with him, and, instead of taking us to the pictures, he drags us off to some museum, and shows us stuffed animals, lumps of stone, or old coins. When George leant on a show case and broke the glass, he got quite angry. Last holidays George and I, out of revenge, played a trick on him. It took him in completely. It is funny how anyone supposed to be so clever should really be so stupid. But

Sir Isaac Newton, I have read, was just as big a fool about some things.

George had a penny that had been run over by a train. We stuck it in the fire until it was red hot, then let it lie in wet salt all night. In the morning nobody could have told it had ever been a penny. It looked about a thousand years old. In the orchard at the back of Uncle Paul's house is a little mound. We scraped some earth off the top, as though we had been digging, and then ran up to the house. Uncle Paul was in his study. We burst in without knocking—we were so excited, of course.

"Look, Uncle Paul!" I shouted. George said I had better do the speaking, because girls are so much better at deceit than boys. "Look!" I cried. "George and I were digging in the orchard, and we have found an old coin, like some of those we saw in the museum."

Uncle Paul took the coin and peered at it through his spectacles. Then he picked up a

magnifying glass from the table and peered through that.

"What do you think it is?" asked George.

"Well," said Uncle Paul cautiously—scientific men are always very cautious—"well, unfortunately it is almost unrecognisable. Where do you say you found it?" We told him. "All right, I'll come and have a look."

While he went to get his hat, George and I let out the laughing we had been holding back. We had been half afraid he wouldn't be taken in.

When we got to the orchard, Uncle Paul looked solemnly into the hole, and then he said: "I think the best plan will be for you

were obliged to go on digging. He sat in the shade, but in the sunshine, where we worked, it was jolly hot. Just before lunch he had another look in the hole and said. "It's disappointing you have not found anything more. But perhaps this afternoon you'll be more lucky."

This was awkward. We hadn't intended to dig all day. We had meant to go to the railway embankment at the foot of his garden with a garden syringe and a can of water, and syringe people in the passing trains. However, as we had taken him in so well, we had to keep it up.

After lunch he came back to the chair and



IMPOSSIBLE.

"There you are, lady, get a ticket there and it will take you right through."

"But, my good man, I can never get through there!"

to dig deeper and see if you can't find something else."

This was splendid. We never thought he would be so completely taken in. We picked up our spades and began to dig. We dug for about an hour, but of course we found no more coins. It was stupid of us not to have made a lot instead of only one. After an hour's digging my back began to ache and George's hands were getting sore. We decided to go up to the house and rest, but just at that moment we saw Uncle Paul coming out. He was carrying a deck chair and a book.

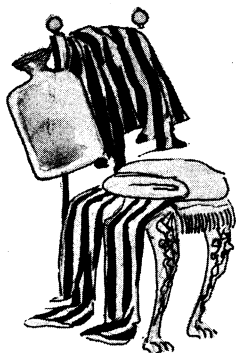
"I am coming to sit beside you," he said, "and then if you find any more coins you can show them to me at once."

He sat down, with his legs up, and read, but he kept looking at us all the time, so that we

smoked a pipe, while we dug again. In about another hour the hole was so deep that George and I were out of sight below ground. We were both getting fed up. We had a consultation together, stooping down. Then I got up and said: "Uncle Paul, I don't believe it's any good digging deeper. I don't think we shall find any more coins."

Uncle Paul rose up slowly and looked down. "Why," he said, "you have not got very far down. Finds are often made much deeper—at fifteen or twenty feet down. I have not given up hope by any means."

The old idiot seemed so convinced, we were obliged to go on, so as not to spoil the joke. But at the end of another hour we were beginning to be really tired, so, after another consultation with George, I bobbed up and



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Julie  
Tait

said: "Uncle Paul, may I see the coin again?"

He pulled it out of his waistcoat pocket. I pretended to look at it carefully, and then scraped it with a sharp stone.

"Do you know," I said in a dejected tone, as though it had just occurred to me, "I am afraid the coin is not an old one, after all. In fact, I am almost sure it is only a mouldy penny. Look, you can see the King's beard."

Uncle Paul took the penny back and gazed at it. "Preposterous, children!" he cried. "There is no date on the coin, and the beard might belong to anyone." This was unfortunately perfectly true, because we had taken

could go on with it next holidays. It is almost impossible to believe what fools some people who think themselves clever can be.



HARRY wanted a dog, and had had many arguments with his mother on the subject. He was sent to the grocer's, and was gone so long that his mother became anxious.

Stepping to a window, she saw Harry down the street, manfully pulling at a rope, the other end of which was tied around the neck of a small dog. The pup was resisting every step of the way.

Presently Harry entered the room.



THE LURE OF THE SEASIDE.

SMALL GIRL: Lucky little donkey to live at the seaside all the year round!

special care to hammer out both the date and the King's face. Uncle Paul appeared quite angry about it. He turned purple and shook with suppressed emotion, just like I do when I am holding back my laughter. I suppose he was fearfully enraged and disappointed.

After that both George and I were too afraid to tell him we had played a trick upon him, so we had to go on digging till tea-time, and after that till it was dark. He never left us the whole time, and never seemed to guess for a moment he was being taken in. All the while he kept on saying what a disappointment it must be for us, and next morning, when we were saying good-bye, he promised the hole should be left just as it was, so that we

"Mother," he cried, "won't you let me keep this little dog? It followed me home."



A MAN was summoned the other day for throwing a brick at a football referee. Can we wonder at the shortage of houses and referees?



MRS. OLDACRES: Does your husband hunt at all?

MRS. NEWRICH: Not yet, but he's going to as soon as he can buy a reliable hound.



## Salt water and your skin

THAT lovely invigorating tingle you feel as you plunge in the sea is all very well, but you don't want it to injure your complexion. And it will unless you're careful! Your skin is always changing, slowly and invisibly, the worn-out outside layer being replaced by new skin.

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FATAL VERSATILITY.

There is a scheme afoot for training domestic servants in the doing of odd jobs about the house.

When Mabel Maud was first obtained  
To tend our domicile,  
And I was told that she'd been trained  
Upon the latest style,  
My fortune I began to bless,  
Presuming I had got  
A chance of perfect idleness  
While she was on the spot.

No longer would it be the view  
Of my exacting spouse  
That I should give my leisure to  
Odd jobs about the house,

BEACH CONVERSATIONS.

SCENE: The sands, Anywhere-on-Sea. Two comfortable-looking matrons seated on deck chairs strike up an acquaintance, and the following conversation, with variations, ensues:

"Do you often come down here?"

"Every year. It's such a grand place for the children."

"That's right. 'Ere, Doris, don't you go in too far, now, unless you want to be sent home."

"I do like to see them enjoying themselves. 'Erbert, let Percy have the spade. Selfish little wretch! I'll box your ears!"

"Yes, what I say is, if they don't enjoy themselves now they never will. . . . No, you can't have a banana. Stop howling, and go and wash the sand off your feet."



THREE FIGURES

"Is this man any good?"

"Well, his batting usually runs into three figures."

"Really?"

"Yes, going in—taking guard—and going out."

But I could tread a lazy path  
Since Mabel Maud would know  
The way to renovate the bath  
And make the mangle go.

But though the scheme appealed to me  
When first it was outlined,  
I realised its fallacy  
Last evening when I dined;  
This blend of joiner, cook and smith  
Seemed far from wisely planned,  
For Maud had stirred the pudding with  
The glue pot in her hand.

Theta.

"That's right. It's 'arf the pleasure to watch their 'appiness, ain't it? Now, then, you George, don't keep messing about with that jellyfish, or you'll get stung, and serve you right!"

"Yes, it's a grand place for the children."

"That's right."

R. H. Roberts.



A PROFESSOR says that cod liver oil contains two hundred and fifty times more vitamins than butter. We don't mind so long as we are not asked to spread the stuff on our muffins.

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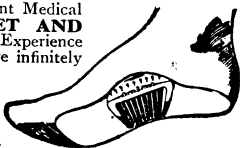
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## AUNT JANE'S HELP

WITH all due respect, Aunt Jane may be very good at knitting socks, but at cross-word puzzles she is one of the world's worst failures. She never ventures to tackle one herself, but is always ready to hand out useless suggestions.

If you said, "Give me the name of a flower of seven letters commencing with 'c' and ending with 'p,'" Aunt Jane would promptly reply, "daffodil." She has even been known to suggest "sardine" when "soles" was the only possible solution.

On one occasion when Ethel exclaimed triumphantly, "I've found out number seven-

## FAMOUS AUTHORS AND THE RADIO.

O may I join the choir invisible.—

GEORGE ELIOT.

And the night shall be filled with music.—

LONGFELLOW.

That brave vibration each way free.—

HERRICK.

An invisible thing, a voice, a mystery.—

WORDSWORTH.

Sit thee there, and send abroad.—KEATS.

There loud uplifted angel trumpets.—

MILTON.

I do wander everywhere,

Swifter than the moon's sphere.—

SHAKESPEARE.



THE REAL RULER.

MOLLY: Daddy, a man outside wants to see the head of the house

FATHER: Tell your mother.

MOTHER: Go and tell cook.

teen across; it's 'shove,' Auntie said, "Oh, my dear, I should put down 'push' if I were you; it's so much more ladylike."

Nevertheless, Aunt Jane is blissfully unaware that she has failed to grasp the first principles of this popular pastime, and, on inspecting a completed puzzle, invariably remarks: "That's splendid; I'm so pleased I was able to help you."



"TWELVE years ago," says Sir Landon Ronald, "there were only three saxophone players in this country." And yet some people assert that there never were any "good old days."

*Facing Third Cover.]*

A PROPHET foretells that in a thousand years' time people will be living in transparent houses. No use Mrs. de Jones saying she is not at home then.



THE bachelor put up with burnt bacon, raw meat, and heavy pastry for one long, dyspeptic month, and then he hinted to his cook that she was wasting her talents, and accordingly the lady of the kitchen departed and sought a situation elsewhere.

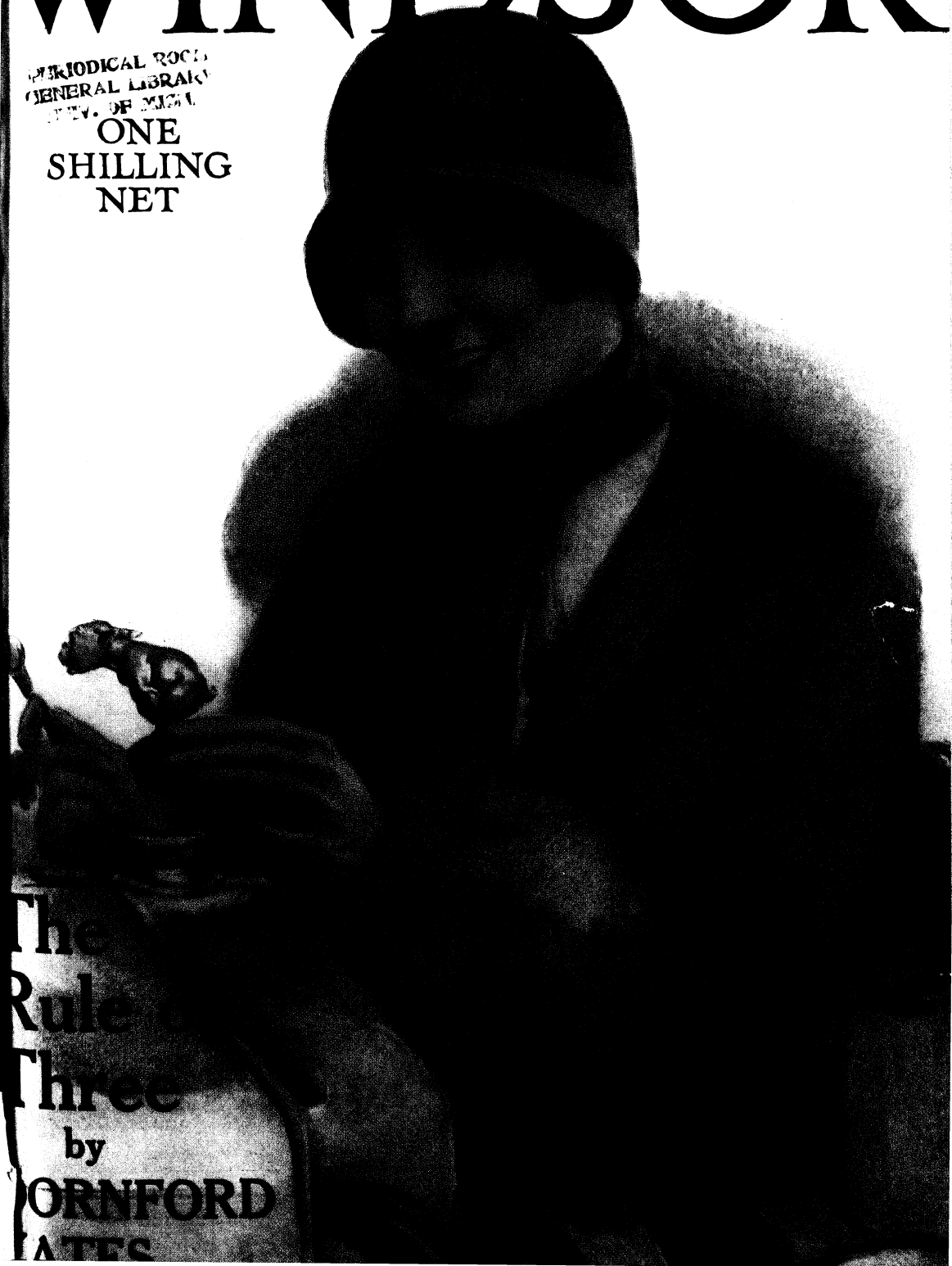
Shortly afterward she gave his name for a reference, and in answer to an inquiry he wrote: "Mrs. Muggins was employed by me for a month, but left owing to illness."

# THE SEPTEMBER WINDSOR

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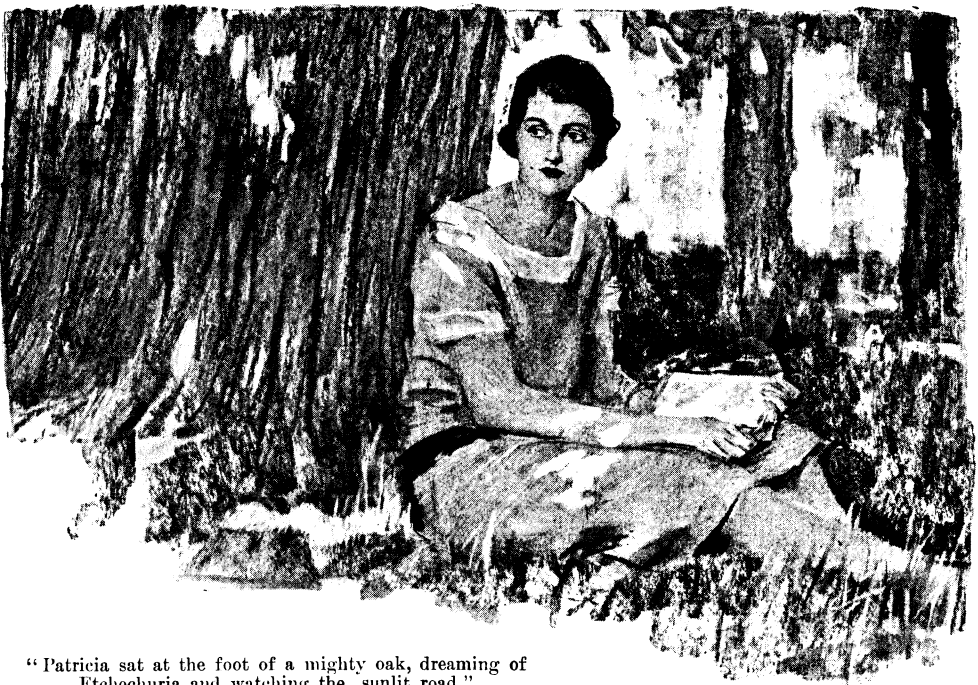






AN EARLY HOUR ON THE DOWNS. A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY BY PERCY G. LUCK.

"How blessed is he who leads a country life,  
Unvexed with anxious cares, and void of strife!"—*Dryden*.



"Patricia sat at the foot of a mighty oak, dreaming of Etchechuria and watching the sunlit road."

# THE RULE OF THREE

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "As Other Men Are," "And Five Were Foolish," "Berry and Co.,"  
"Jonah and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden," "The Courts of Idleness," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

THE forest lies south of Marmande and west of Agen, and that is near enough for our purpose. As for the Beaulieus and Eulalie, that it lay south of Marmande was enough for them. They had no eyes for the East nor yet for the West. The mountains lay South—due South: a few more miles, and the range would be within sight.

Still, the forest was very pleasant, and since July was full and the weather was hot, the three delighted to linger in its green naves and chancels, forget the burden of the day strolling its cool cloisters, and

welcome the whisper of the evening breeze picking its fanciful way between the tufted pinnacles and spires.

Eulalie had fallen into step with Patricia and Simon as though she had walked beside them for twenty years. I suppose their personalities exactly agreed. Certainly the spirit of adventure went far to key them to the same pitch. Again, the three were from the same stable, to wit, that flashing world whose tenants are commonly styled 'The Idle Rich'—a gross misnomer, since many are anything but idle and more than half are poor. Be that as it may,

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their stable days were over, and, while the Beaulieus were more than content, Eulalie was happier than she had ever been.

Patricia had visited Paris on her behalf and had fetched a trunkful of things, but the girl who had adorned Longchamps year after year wore tennis-shoes day after day and a hat which she bought at Tours for seven francs.

If the present was sweet, the future was big with promise.

Etchechuria—'The Lost Country.'

Night after night the three pored over their maps, discussing, speculating what manner of mystery it was they were about to explore. That somewhere up in the mountains lay this land the three were convinced. Etchechuria was fabulous only because it could not be found. And it was never found because it was believed to be fabulous. After all. . . . Then they would remind one another that it was 1925 and that slices of Europe are not easily hid. But always their downright evidence lifted up its head. Durand, most practical of men, had frankly admitted a mystery he could not fathom: and Patricia's man had said that he was going back. . . .

So it came that while Simon and Eulalie were fetching eggs and milk from Saint's Day Farm and Yves was down stream, optimistically seeking trout whom he might tickle into another world, Patricia sat at the foot of a mighty oak, dreaming of Etchechuria and watching the sunlit road somewhere west of Agen and south of Marmande.

A car slid by, containing Porus Bureau, once of a suburb of Rouen, but since the decease of his uncle, who had made both ends overlap in Cincinnati and had died intestate and single, of the fashionable world.

Patricia hardly noticed the car and, had she been told of its contents, would have been none the wiser. She had never heard of Porus Bureau. Nor he of her. But he saw her frock as he passed, and that was quite enough for Porus Bureau.

A toss-pot had once rallied Porus in public for an inveterate gallant. It was a bow at a venture. The toss-pot had nothing to go on, but, since for years he had been dependent for his liquor upon the benevolence of others, he had become something of a judge of character. He had his reward. Porus never forgot the calumny, and the toss-pot drank upon his cost whenever the

two were in the same town. But since the deepest gratitude may wear thin with age, the toss-pot was careful from time to time to repeat the delicious slander until his patron actually began to acquire the reputation of being the devil of a fellow where women were concerned. Reflecting uneasily upon the penalty of fame, Porus, who could be as gallant as anyone where no gallantry was required, began to pull up his socks. Greatness had been thrust upon him. Unless he wished to be dishonoured, he must shoulder the load. So he grew what moustache he could, greased his dirty red hair every day and generally got down to it. . . .

Why he was never assaulted I cannot tell. His power of discrimination was that of a child of two. But he survived and, getting into his stride, presently pestered women to whom once he would not have dared to raise his watery eyes. It is good to think that he had many failures, but anything which could be interpreted as a success at once intoxicated and inspired.

And so in the course of years it came about that the idle word of a toss-pot, uttered in the hope of refreshment, became a great and noble truth to which many could testify. Porus Bureau had become a thorough-paced pest.

Porus vacated his car and stole back the way he had come. Porus believed the frock to be unaccompanied, but it was as well to make sure. Besides, perhaps its wearer was not worth powder and shot.

He saw Patricia again before she saw him and, looking upon her, decided that she was meet to be kissed and taken for a short drive and possibly upon some future occasion publicly entertained.

After a long look he passed behind a bush, wiped his unpleasant face, adjusted an arresting tie and cocked his hat. Then he put his hands in his pockets and sauntered forward.

"Ah, *pardon*," he said and uncovered. "I do not suppose you shall know, but I've lose my way."

The steady brown eyes rested for a moment on his face. Then they travelled slowly to his feet and back again.

"Yes?"

Porus covered his head.

"I say I've lose my way, an' now——"

"Where do you want to go to?"

Bureau put his head on one side.

"Ah, now," he said playfully. "What a question for you to ask." He bowed.

"Bud of course I was there, my dear, where everyone was wanting to get."

Patricia stared.

"You're wasting your time," she said. "There's nothing doing here—nothing at all."

The man wagged his head.

"Ark," he said. "There was a little bird 'as say——"

"I'm afraid," said Patricia, "that you've been badly brought up. I don't blame you for coming to see if you could get off, because you look that sort, but I should have thought you knew that when a man sees or is told that there's nothing doing, it's up to him to withdraw."

Porus grinned and began to shake his shoulders.

"When a girl shall 'ave say 'No,' she 'as mean 'Per'aps': when she shall 'ave say——"

"I see," said Patricia slowly. "I suppose the idea is to kiss me—even against my will."

Porus replied with a leer.

Patricia's slight left hand went up to her throat. She had never yet blown her whistle, but it looked as though now——

The ribbon was not there.

To-day for the first time she had forgotten to put it on.

"Why, then, you are married!" said Porus swiftly. "An' oll the time I 'ave thought I 'ave been speakin' to an *ingenue*." He began to advance delicately. "Well, now, I am sure your 'usban' is a fine fellow, but 'e mus' nod be zelvish. No. An' I do nod think 'e will miss one or two kisses, especially if——"

Patricia rose.

"Listen," she said. "If you try to touch me, my husband will break your neck. He won't like doing it because it'll involve touching you and he's rather particular about his hands. But, all the same, he'll do it."

Threat and insult alike slithered off Porus' back.

The husband was not within earshot—obviously: his own car, however, lay a stone's throw away. As for the insult, his hide, which had never been thin, had been rendered callous. "Now, now," he said cooly, "she mus' nod be voolish, my beautivul girl of the woods. Jus' because——"

"If you only knew," said Patricia, trying to gain time, "how you're letting your country down." The undergrowth was so thick, and Porus was between her and the road. "But then you're the type that does.

Less than a week ago I walked with a *poilu* for a couple of miles in a place as lonely as this. He actually came up and said might he stay near me because he thought it unwise for me to be all alone. But he was a gentleman, while you. . . ."

"Yes?" said Bureau, grinning. "What am I, *mignon*?"

With an eye on Porus' hand, Patricia shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, it hardly seems possible," she said, "but you seem to be as dirty as you look."

As she spoke, she jumped. . . .

It must be confessed that Porus was not at all pleased.

His skin may have been thick, but the lady's last sentence had been delivered in French and had lost nothing by being so rendered. Indeed, it would have stung anyone to action. The action, however, which he had taken had been nugatory, and the wrist which he should have been holding was out of sight. Indeed, all he could see of Patricia was four finger-tips so poised upon the bark of the oak as to suggest her readiness to revolve about its trunk as and when it seemed expedient to do so.

With an ugly look in his eyes, Porus settled his hat on his head.

Patricia's clear voice rang out.

"*Yves! Yves! A moi. A moi. Vite.*"

Porus waited.

The woods gave back the echo, but there was no response.

\* \* \* \* \*

The wayfarer trudged forward, heavy-laden with a suit-case in either hand.

He was a pleasant-looking man of perhaps forty years and a habit of body which was not so much corpulent as suggestive of corpulence to come—a suggestion which the condition to which the sun, the suit-cases and his mode of progression had combined to reduce him went far to contradict. Indeed, he larded the dusty road at every step. For all that, he marched steadily forward, looking neither to right nor left, but now and again raising his blue eyes to heaven and assuming an expression of such profound resignation that whoever had chanced to meet him could not have forborne to smile.

Once upon a time Pomfret Tudor had been a very rich man. He had lived in The Albany, belonged to five Clubs, travelled, collected especially rare silver and taken a mild interest in architectural archæology. Then one day his money, which was in Russia, had disappeared, and,



when his debts had been paid, Tudor was left with a second lieutenant's pay, a good many more clothes than he needed, seven christening-cups and five porringers. The pay, which had become that of a Staff Captain, ceased with the War, and Pomfret,

to pay for his knowledge of silver, he entered the somewhat dreary arena of architectural archæology—rather, I fancy, with the idea of going down with colours flying than of making a livelihood. He rose, if he did not prosper. After two years he accepted the Honorary Secretaryship of a prominent Society and began to draw his expenses. At the end



"'He is a nice, bright lad, isn't he?'" said Pomfret, sitting up in the road. 'And before we go any further, have you got any dogs? You know.' Nice, faithful, blundering brutes with fangs."

like many another, found himself at a very loose end. This had not mattered once, but now. . . .

Tudor was not the man to go about seeking work and finding none. After satisfying himself that no one was prepared

of five he had contributed many most readable papers to annals which were never read, delivered a dozen lectures, sold six christening-cups and become a welcome authority in the musty world which he adorned. By the time the sixth year was

over he had come to loathe his profession as the prisoner for life loathes the colour of the walls of his cell, and had been unanimously entrusted with the task of compiling a book which was to be published in two volumes, to be entitled *The Saracen in France*, and to bring him a knighthood. Tudor had accepted the charge with bulging eyes. . . .

Five months later he sold his last porringer but one, and, cursing the sages who had delighted to honour him with

at hand and quietly—not as most Frenchwomen speak.

Suddenly a man replied.

The greasy caress of '*mignon*' and its violent rebuff told their own tale.

Pomfret set down his cases and quickened his steps.



"'I'm most frightfully sorry,' she wailed. 'And it is so awful of me to laugh, but it's so—so. . . .'"

a deep and bitter curse, laid fresh hold of the plough and sailed for France—with the disastrous result that in the month of July, 1925, he was larding a dusty road somewhere west of Agen and south of Marmande.

The murmur of voices came to his ears, floating down the road.

A girl was speaking somewhere quite close

As the bushes revealed the oak, Patricia's clear voice rang out. . . . After waiting for the echo to die, Pomfret lifted up his voice.

"*A votre service, Madame.*"

Porus Bureau started as though he had been suddenly burnt. Then he wheeled round and stood swallowing.

Patricia stepped out and past him to where the new-comer stood.

"Please will you stay with me until my husband comes?"

"I will indeed," said Tudor. He nodded at Porus Bureau. "Has that—touched you?"

Patricia, who was upon the edge of tears, shook her head.

"Shall I keep him for your husband? Or shall I, er, organize his removal?"

Porus, who did not understand what 'organize' meant, but disliked the sound of the word, started forward excitedly.

"*Pardon, Monsieur*, I do not know 'oo you are, but it is ride you shall know that I 'ave ornly stob to ask sis lady se way, an' then laigue a vool because she mus' flird with me——"

Here he was felled by a blow upon the mouth such as he had never dreamed of. He was then assisted to his feet and immediately felled again by a blow upon the nose and right eye compared with which the blow upon the mouth was the flick of a handkerchief. Beside himself with shock and agony, mad with rage at the perfidy of his assailant, yelling with fright, he staggered instinctively to his feet, whether with some idea of flight or retaliation or protest will never be known. Ere he could think, violent hands were laid upon his sacred neck, he was reversed, kicked into the road, wrenched to the right and kicked again. He was kicked until he could not stand, and when he sank whooping to his knees he was kicked until he rose. Finally he was shown a car and asked if it was his. He could only nod. Then the door was opened and he was kicked inside.

"And now go," said Tudor.

Porus, weeping bitterly, was understood to say that he was physically incapable of going.

Tudor regarded his watch.

"If," he said, "you are not out of sight in one minute, I shall open the door and . . ."

Assuming a sitting posture, but avoiding the seat, Porus felt feverishly for the self-starter.

"And if," added Tudor, "I ever see you again, I shall——"

The threat was lost in the raving of first speed.

Thirty seconds later Porus was out of sight.

Pomfret wiped his hands upon a tussock of grass and turned towards the oak, whistling the stave of a song.

As he approached, a violent flurry of French suggested that reinforcements, pre-

sumably in the shape of Yves, had now arrived and, upon learning what they had missed, were refusing to be comforted.

This was a fact.

His arms, bare and dripping, flung skywards, his face contorted with passion, the chauffeur was delivering a series of agonised apodoses all relative to the dilapidation of Porus Bureau, while Patricia, with her back to the road, was telling him not to be silly and assuring him that Porus' condition left nothing to be desired.

Pomfret appeared.

The next moment it was all over.

In the twinkling of an eye the ravening Yves had screamed, pointed an accusing finger, bellowed '*C'est lui*' and, hurling himself upon his unsuspecting and unready prey, borne him heavily to the ground. . . .

"*Idiot! Madman!*" shrieked Patricia, seizing him by the collar and endeavouring to drag him away. "*You are murdering the wrong man.*"

"*Mais c'est lui qui——*"

"No, no, NO! Do I not know my assailant? Is this one's hair red? Get up at once and let this gentleman alone."

"*Mais——*"

"*Frightening imbecile!*" screamed Patricia, shaking the chauffeur furiously. "WILL YOU DO AS I SAY?"

"Don't interrupt him," said Pomfret faintly. "He wants to say something. Perhaps he's got some reason for murder which we don't know."

"If you do not rise, assassin," said Patricia shakily, "before I count six, when Monsieur comes back, I shall ask him to send you away. One—two. . . ."

Reluctantly releasing his victim, the chauffeur rose to his feet.

"And go back to the caravan, idiot," continued his mistress fiercely. "And don't ever dare to disobey me again." She turned to Pomfret and fell upon her knees by his side. "I can't tell you," she said tremulously, "how frightfully sorry——"

"He is a nice, bright lad, isn't he?" said Pomfret, sitting up in the road. "And before we go any further, have you got any dogs? You know. Nice, faithful, blundering brutes with fangs."

Patricia sat back on her heels, covered her face and bowed before a tempest of laughter.

"I'm most frightfully sorry," she wailed. "And it is so awful of me to laugh, but it's so—so. . . ."

"Side-splitting," said Pomfret. "That's the word. Side-splitting. Oh, I can see

that. But then treachery always is. If somebody's earned a fish and you hand him a serpent, it's enough to make a mute scream, especially if the serpent bites him."

"Be quiet," sobbed Patricia. "I mean—you know I didn't do it on purpose. And you were so wonderful." She rose unsteadily. "And now do please get up. We've a caravan just through there, and Yves—the chauffeur—can brush you and——"

"Thanks," said Pomfret, rising, "but I'd rather not. At the moment I'm off Yves, armed or unarmed. I daresay my unaccountable aversion will pass, but——"

"I'll brush you," said Patricia tearfully. "And of course you must have a drink. Aren't you thirsty?"

Pomfret laughed wildly.

"Well, I suppose you would call it 'thirsty,'" he said. "My tongue's swollen, the roof of my mouth's cracked, my gullet's choked with superfluous *route nationale*, while as for my uvula—well, I shouldn't think it'd ever be the same again. It was a most beautiful uvula, too," he added miserably. "Never mind. What about a large gall and wormwood?"

So soon as Patricia could speak—

"We can't rise to that and we haven't a very big choice, but——"

"My dear," said Pomfret brokenly, "if you'll give me a drink of anything that can be made to splash, I'll—I'll let Yves brush me."

"Then come along."

Pomfret collected his suit-cases and they passed into the forest. Presently they came to a little glade.

"There's the caravan," said Patricia, pointing, "but as it's so hot we keep the drinks in the brook. Simon, my husband, has made a little cage, and——"

"Simon the Cellarer," said Pomfret. "Yes. 'A cage' you were saying. Go on."

"We've lime-juice," bubbled Patricia, "and rather a nice white wine and beer. And then, of course, there's any amount of brook."

Pomfret blinked very fast and moistened his lips.

"If," he said uncertainly, "you could spare a small portion of the, er, malt liquor . . . I mean, you'll hardly believe me, but I haven't tasted any beer for nearly three hours."

\* \* \* \* \*

Eulalie strolled beside Simon with her head in the air.

What conversation they had was made by the man, and though, when he spoke, she answered sweetly enough, her replies were slow in coming, like those of one whose brain is about higher business which it is loth to lay aside.

At length—

"The lady," said Simon, "is *distracte*. Would it be indiscreet to ask why?"

"No," said the girl, "it wouldn't. But you won't like the reason at all."

The man raised his eyebrows.

"Let's see."

"Right," said Eulalie, addressing the tops of the trees. "Simon Beaulieu, Esquire, I'm going back on my word."

Simon opened his eyes.

"That's not like you," he said.

"How do you know?"

"From your beautiful face," said Simon. "People with faces like yours don't go back on their word."

Eulalie pointed to a beech.

"If we sat down there for ten minutes we could have a little argument. Not that I want one, but I'm afraid you'll insist. It's really waste of time, because I've made up my mind, and when I've made up my mind—well, the wise and prudent usually change the subject. But I suppose that doesn't weigh with you."

"Not a blinkin' grain," said Simon cheerfully. "Gently with the hen's eggs."

"Who dropped the butter in the brook?" said Eulalie scornfully, laying her netful of eggs tenderly upon the sward. "And don't put the milk on a slope—it's bad for my heart. Thank you." She sat down demurely enough with her hands in her lap. "I suppose you haven't got a cigarette."

Simon passed her his case and matches and took out a pipe. . . .

"I'm not going to Etchechuria," said the girl. "I said—I promised I would, but I've changed my mind. At the next place we come to I'm going to kiss Patricia and probably you, and then ask the way to the station and get into a train."

Simon was imperturbable.

"I see," he said slowly, filling his pipe. "You know, I was always afraid of this. Your life's been so exciting, so full of movement and smart that to wander along like a child in a Nursery Rhyme in search of a fairy-tale. . . ." He broke off and shrugged his shoulders. "Well, it's like a small milk and soda when you're used to champagne."

Eulalie took off her hat. Then she laced

her fingers, set them behind her head and let her lithe body sink backwards till she was flat on the ground. Finally she crossed her ankles.

"You can leave out the soda," she said. "Sweet, rich milk, warm from the cow—Nursery Rhyme liquor. But, as you justly remark, I'm used to champagne. Was Patricia afraid, too?"

"She hasn't said so."

"Well, I expect she was. In fact, I hope she was. If down in the bottom of your heart you suspect that somebody's a wash-out, it isn't such a shock when they run up the waster's flag. And there you are. You two gave me a chance to get out of the world, and I fairly jumped at it. And now I've been out a month I want to get back. Don't think I haven't been happy or that I'm ungrateful, but I'm of the world worldly and back to my muck-heap I must go."

Simon recovered his matches and lighted his pipe.

"Your occupation," he said, "is gone. How will you live?"

Eulalie shrugged her shoulders.

"My face," she said, "is my fortune. If I can't marry some fool with money to burn before my credit gives out, I ought to be shot."

"You ought indeed," said Simon heartily. "In fact, I should think the difficulty would be which of the fools to choose. What shall we give you for a wedding-present? A copy of the Sale of Goods Act?"

Eulalie laughed.

"You're very clever this morning, aren't you?"

"I wish I was," said Simon. "Then I should beat you to your knees. As it is, I can only whimper at your pretty pink heels, like a dog that wants his mistress to go the opposite way. What do you miss the most? Night life?"

"Night life!" said Eulalie contemptuously. "D'you think I'm that sort of girl? D'you think my day isn't complete without hearing an overfed nigger squirt grunts from a saxophone? No. I miss the whole thing—the people, the rush, the movement, the high lights. It's a vicious taste, but, you see, I've had them too long. And now my palate's ruined, and I can't taste the milk."

"In a word, you're bored?"

Eulalie nodded.

"Not with you and Patricia. You mustn't think that. But I'm too tough to

follow the simple life. I can see the books in the brooks, but when I've waded through one, that's enough for me. I want to get back to Things. They'll hurt, of course, and I shall have my bad times. But I shan't be bored."

With half-closed eyes, Simon gazed into the greenwood.

"I see," he said slowly. "I see. . . . Look at that dragon-fly there. Isn't he superb? Never mind. My dear, why tell me you're bored when you know it's untrue?"

If Simon was imperturbable, so was Eulalie. She continued to smoke placidly.

Presently she raised her eyebrows.

"You put the words into my mouth," she said carelessly.

"I know. I thought perhaps you were bored and I wanted to see. It was very unscrupulous. And now I'll tell you why you propose to go."

Eulalie laughed.

"I'm not at all sure that I want to hear," she said. "There's no reason on earth why I should argue with you. I am my own mistress."

"I made you that," said Simon.

There was a silence.

"I see," said Eulalie. "You think that gives you the right to put pressure on me to stay against my will."

Simon shook his head.

"Oh, no," he said. "Not against your will. If you wanted to go, that would be different. But I don't think you want to go."

Eulalie played her last card.

"My good Simon," she said, "don't over-reach yourself. Say you want me to stay, if you like, but don't vivisection my mind and tell me that my list of its contents is wrong. I can't bear it."

"Have a heart," said Simon. "I know I'm on ice that's cracking: don't push me in. In fact, as you know you can trust me, why don't you help me out? Oh, and I'll tell you why you're going. Because you think you're *de trop*."

The girl threw away her cigarette and clapped her hands to her face.

After a little—

"You might have spared me," she said.

The man touched her on the shoulder.

"I couldn't, old lady," he said. "There's too much at stake. You see, we don't want you to go—Patricia and I."

Eulalie swallowed.

"Do you want to make me cry?"

"My dear. . . ."

"Then don't say things like that or touch me again. I thought I had no heart till I met you two. But—but I was wrong. Somewhere inside I've got one—a sappy little fellow with a highly sensitive tail. The tail is connected with the eyes. Twist it and you get the tears. It's very ridiculous. And now don't speak until I do."

Simon obeyed, smoking steadily and letting his eyes wander over the delicate labyrinth of galleries which seemed to have been driven through the living leaves. Surely such bowers and terraces never were seen, at once so brave and dainty, so majestic and so snug. William the Baptist had named them 'choirs'—a perfect name. The only name, of course. 'In Quires and Places where they sing. . . .'

"One man to two women is wrong," said Eulalie quietly. "Once it was right enough, but it won't do to-day. That's half what's the matter with the world. I'm a surplus woman, my dear. But even if I was a man I should still be a third party. And there's the rub. You can add a man to some unions and improve them out of all knowledge. I've seen it done. But not to yours. As for a woman. . . ."

"Isn't that a matter for us? If Pat and I are happy——"

"No," said Eulalie. "I know you're happy to have me, but I'm not content to stay." She sat up and touched her ankle. "When the devil was sick, the devil would interlope. Now that he's well. . . . Simon dear, I'm not lonely. I don't feel left. You two are just wonderful. Pat's even better than you. She ought to be with you now. She would be with you now if I wasn't here. Does she let me feel that? No. Yet it sticks out. You're all she's got and yet she shares you with me as if it was the most natural thing in the world. And it's about the most unnatural—you can take my word for that. Well, I can't let that go on."

"Yet it sticks out," said Simon. "'Why do the people imagine a vain thing?' Of course, you feel super-numerary."

"I don't," said Eulalie fiercely. "I never have. I don't know how you've done it, but between you you've managed that. If I didn't know I was surplusage——"

"I hate that word," said Simon.

"Not half as much as I do. And that's why I'm going."

Simon smacked the turf with his palm.

"You are not—surplusage."

"My dear, you aren't qualified to judge. I've studied you two for a month. A day was enough, but that's neither here nor there. You're not unsocial or lovesick, but—well, you're Pat's natural element and Pat's yours and there's an end of it. I'm not going to——"

"You promised," said Simon.

"I know. And I loathe going back on my word. But not to go back would be worse. You see, you and Pat together are just perfect: and any addition to your *ménage*, however decorative, automatically becomes surplusage. I say 'you see,' but you can't. You never could. But everyone else can."

Simon sighed.

"It sounds," he said, "as though we had the Oxford manner. Never mind. I like your first point best—that I'm overwhelmed."

"I never said that. I said that one man to two women was wrong, and so it is. It isn't dignified. A girl can have one man or six, or none at all. But she can't have a fraction of a man. Not that I care—I don't. I don't want a man at all. But it cheapens Patricia so."

"D'you really think she cares?"

"I don't care whether she cares or whether she doesn't," said Eulalie. "My butting in like this cheapens your wife. If you like, it cheapens me too. And I don't like that at all. Besides, it's bad for you. Extremely bad. At present you're quite all right, but you'd soon get spoiled. You're awfully lucky, you know, to have Pat all to yourself—astoundingly lucky. If you lived a normal life you'd have to share her, my friend. As it is—well, to have a monopoly of Pat is enough to turn most men's heads, but to have me hanging round too, ready to smile and be talked to, to be petted and squired and generally appropriated—oh, you'd get spoiled to death. I can't quite imagine you spoiled, but it's a law of Nature."

"No one could ever," said Simon, "appropriate you. You're too independent and—and elusive. And there's the answer to your little complaint. We often talk you over—that's natural, and we always thank our stars because you're like Euclid's point. Although you have position, you have no magnitude. Your company's most refreshing, yet it leaves us alone. You don't hold aloof, yet you don't intervene. Now, Yves, who is part of the car, gets in the way. He has no position, but only magnitude. Again,

you and Pat and I have a common denominator."

"The difference," said Eulalie, "between Yves and me is very simple to define. Yves is a necessary evil, and I'm an unnecessary evil. And that is why, despite your most handsome eulogy, your loving little friend is going to push quietly off." With that, she picked up the eggs and rose to her feet. "I'm sorry—awfully sorry. But since we've a common denominator—I think that's true—I'm sure you'll understand. If I thought that either of you, similarly placed, would stay on, I swear I'd do the same. But nothing will ever convince me that you would."

Simon rose, frowning, and picked up his *cruche*.

"I didn't want to beat up a fourth," he said. "I wanted him to roll up natural-like. But rather than let you go. . . ."

Eulalie laughed.

"In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird," Simon, that thrust was unworthy of you. It wasn't a thrust at all. It was a hack."

"Not so fast," said Simon, "and I'll tell you a secret. Ever since you arrived I've had an eye out for a fourth. A man. I'll tell you why. Because, when we get to the hills and we drop the caravan, to shoulder you both will be too much for me."

"The answer to that," said the girl, "is too obvious."

"One might think so, mightn't one? But don't rush in, m' dear, like 'Arold 'Otstuff. Listen to uncle instead. When Yves has gone with the van and we're legging it in the mountains, how can I ever leave Patricia alone? We're about to campaign, aren't we? Well, think what that means. You can't campaign arm in arm. If the milk's three miles away and she's too tired to walk, what'll I do? Go about smiting rocks?" Standing quite still, delicate finger to lip, Eulalie stared on the ground. "So now you see why it is that *I must have another man*. And as you're so dead against three, perhaps you'll stay."

"If I hadn't blown in—what then? You started off without any idea of reinforcements."

"I know. I admit it. It hadn't occurred to me then how essential they were. But it's pretty obvious now. One lives and learns quite a lot on the open road."

After a little space—

"Whoever called you 'Simon,'" said

Eulalie, "made the mistake of their lives. You're as slim as they make 'em. So slim that you seem quite simple. How do you do it?"

"I don't," said Simon. "Any fool can bluff who holds five aces."

"I'll see you," said Eulalie. "Beat up your fourth—your man—within the week, and I'll go to Etchechuria."

"That's a good girl. And now I'm tired of the Habeas Corpus Act. Tell me another tale of 'The Bank of England,' or repeat the one about 'Red Violets,' and how Boy Pleydell refused to give you away. As I told you, I've known him for years. And why didn't you like Adèle? She's the best ever."

Twenty minutes later they were approaching the camp when a shriek of laughter rose and fell upon their ears.

The two stared at one another blankly.

"Pat!" breathed Eulalie and began to run like a deer.

Simon set down his *cruche*. . . .

He was in the glade first and, as she came pelting after, slowed up and put out a hand.

"What is it?" panted the girl.

Simon pointed ahead.

Patricia was holding on to the caravan as though for support, while two or three paces away a fair-haired man was carefully brushing a coat and venting an audible soliloquy upon the vanity of human achievement.

"I told you I wasn't bluffing," said Simon quietly.

\* \* \* \* \*

Luncheon was over, and the four were at ease on the sward.

"You see," said Pomfret, "it was like this. After ten days at Poitiers it became expedient that I should visit certain neighbouring towns in the hope of obtaining information which could never be of the slightest interest or value to any living soul, and could therefore hardly be with decency omitted from the volumes upon which I am engaged. That's the motif of architectural archaeology, you know. Abject and utter uselessness. If you can demonstrate that the mind of a fool who built a drain which disappeared six hundred years ago was affected by the memory of the wall he pulled down to save himself the trouble of carting some new bricks, you've struck a blow for architectural archaeology. But that's by the way. I had to visit these towns.

"The first was sixteen miles distant. I



went by train. Except that the degree of heat prevailing in the coaches was considerably above that at which I had always believed mammalian life to become extinct, my actual mode of progression calls for no printable comment. It took me three hours to go and nearly four to come back. I had forty minutes there and the station was a mile from the town. . . .

"When late that night I felt sufficiently restored to review the day's work, I was confronted with the inspiring fact that I had missed my breakfast, spent seven hours in great torment and run two miles in the burden and heat of the day in order to purchase and consume two bottles of beer of a brand which compared unfavourably with that of Poitiers. . . . Well, I don't mind preaching archæology, but the practice of the art of uselessness has a reflex action which is bad for my heart. Indeed, the very prospect, not only of proceeding South, but of scouring the country by means of the French railway system moved me so much that upon slight reflection I repaired to a neighbouring garage and purchased an automobile. . . .

"Looking back, I fancy the air at Poitiers must have suited the car. So long as I stayed in the town and returned at night, the brute went perfectly. Then one day I packed up and started for Angoulême.

"When I was half-way there the exhaust-pipe broke immediately beneath my feet—at least, it subsequently transpired that such was the case. Knowing nothing of these technicalities, but finding myself suddenly enveloped in offensive smoke, I not unnaturally assumed that the car was on fire, and, only waiting to remove my large trunk and two suit-cases, withdrew to a neighbouring eminence to view the holocaust. This, however, did not mature, and after a quarter of an hour I was forced to the conclusion that I was now the fortunate possessor of a movable incinerator. I was still wondering what to do when help arrived.

"When I say 'help,' I mean 'illumination.' . . .

"The driver of a passing car stopped, alighted, made a cursory examination and, bidding me look beneath the step, showed me the broken pipe. Then he took out the carpet, prised up the floor-boards, threw them into the road and showed it me again. Then he opened the throttle wide, and, when the smoke had lifted, pointed to the breach and insisted that it had escaped at that point. Then he said that it was not

serious, and that all I had to do was to fit a new pipe. He added that, as it was a foreign car, I should not find one in France. Then he said that he feared that until a new pipe was fitted I should find the smoke and fumes disagreeable, adding that the floor-boards and carpet would be a great comfort and protection, but that to replace them would be foolish, as they would certainly catch fire. Then he accelerated again for me to see the flames. He was in the act of explaining that the only reason why these were not plainly visible was because the sun was too bright, when he saw the look in my eye. This, I fear, was most obvious. I like to remember that he faltered, went backward, tried not to run to his car and drove hurriedly away. . . .

"Well, it seemed best to go on.

"It was when I was five miles from Angoulême that I discovered that I had not replaced my luggage. . . .

"After a short but violent brainstorm I returned somehow to find that my trunk had disappeared. I suppose whoever took it suspected that it was of more value than the suit-cases. In this he was right. Had it been insured, I should have recovered about two hundred and fifty pounds. When I regained consciousness I emerged from the thicket or coppice to which I had retired, and turned the car once more in the direction of Angoulême. It was getting dark now, so a tire burst. It took me exactly one hour to change the wheel and one hour and ten seconds to observe that the new tire was flat. As I've told you, the practice of the art of uselessness is bad for my heart, and for one long moment I feared for my reason. However, I was spared to put on another wheel, split my skull upon the near head-lamp and leave my jack in the road.

"It really only remained for my lights to fail. This they did about three miles later. . . .

"After a short stroll in a quarry to collect my thoughts, I proceeded by the light of the stars at a walking pace. Indeed, I presently alighted and walked by the side of the car, steering her from without, for in this way my feet and legs were not burned and I found the fumes less stifling.

"Angoulême was won at a quarter to twelve.

"I spent the next two days in bed. Then, the car having been repaired, I made bold to visit a townlet nine miles away. On the way there the car was seized with some intestinal trouble and was unable to move.



I spent six hours by the roadside and was then towed back to Angoulême.

"Three days later I tried again. All went well until I was starting for home. Then in a crowded street the accelerator stuck, and, before I knew where I was, I had transferred the contents of a gig, which was full of women, to a float, which was full of calves, mounted the pavement and forced an entrance into a small *épicerie*. . . .

"I can't talk about the next two hours. Enough that they were both crammed with every circumstance of insult, peril and extortion. The condition of the car alone was like some terrible dream. Olives all over the steps, dates on the windscreen, one wheel clogged with herrings, the other hub-deep in jam and broken glass, drifts of coffee on the wings, rice in the engine-shield and the ruin of a dozen of oil on the front or driver's seat. . . .

"I didn't go out for a week—not until I left Angoulême. From there to Marmande life was one long nightmare. First, the battery broke: it didn't fail, it blinkin' well broke and discharged corrosive fluid all over the place. Then the gears got overwrought and had a nervous breakdown. The remaining parts began to exchange functions. The clutch, which should have seized, slipped: the valves, which should have slipped, stuck: the brakes, which should have come off, seized, and any number of bolts and nuts, which ought to have stuck, came off. Of course, by now I was beginning to come unbuttoned. My nerve was going. I was almost afraid to ask for petrol, and if anyone stared at the car I felt like bursting into tears.

"Then, three days ago, just after passing Marmande, the exhaust-pipe broke again. . . . Same place, same smoke, same hellish heat, same stench, same everything. . . .

"Well, I went mad.

"I drove up a cart-track, took out my suit-cases and left the car in a wood. Then I walked back to the Garonne—just outside Marmande. There was a good head of water, and a careful survey of the bridge satisfied me that it would serve my purpose. I then went into the town, with a suit-case in either hand, dined ostentatiously and announced that I was walking to Spain. Then I returned to the wood. I hid my luggage and such trifles as I had left, and just about midnight I drove the car to the bridge. . . .

"One minute later it was done. The swine went over, raving like a posse of fiends,

and three hours later I was ten miles away.

"And there we are.

"I'm expecting to be arrested any moment for wilful damage to a bridge and attempted suicide, because, after all my trouble to cover my tracks, I left a plate on the dash bearing both my name and my address. You see? The art of uselessness again. I'm doomed to take infinite pains to achieve futility. I've carried those blasted wallets thirty-five brown-baked miles. The right one's the heaviest, and I haven't unlocked it for weeks. If you were to open it now and show me that it was full of poor quality manure, I shouldn't even express surprise. It is inconceivable that I should have been overburdened for *something*. But if for one calendar month I have been manhandling about a hundred-weight of inferior fertilizer—lifting it in and out of cars, lugging it up and down stairs, locking my door upon it lest it should be stolen, and finally bearing it to my wounding for thirty-five miles—that would be consonant with the fortune I have enjoyed ever since Poitiers.

"And now I must go. It's another ten kilometres to St. Justin, and you've no idea how guano makes your arm ache."

Patricia looked tearfully at Eulalie and then at Simon. Then she turned to Pomfret.

"Why invite trouble?" she said. "We have a spare bedroom here."

"Oh, I couldn't do that," said Tudor. "You're awfully kind to ask me, but—"

"Please do," said Eulalie. "And then you can come with us to Etchechuria."

Pomfret Tudor sat up, with a hand to his lips. For a moment he sat thinking. Then the light in his eyes died.

He laughed shortly.

"I'd love to," he said. "I can't think of anything I'd enjoy more. You three are congenial: I love adventure and the open air; and I want to step out of the world. . . . My race is nearly over, and between you and me I've lost. The world doesn't think so, but then the world doesn't know. The idea was not to come down—you know, become shabby-genteel. So I put up a show. I had a vague idea of carrying my bat. But I'm bad at finance or something, and so I've lost. Not yet, though, and that's my trouble. *I must finish my race*. With luck I'll just about do it—if I don't buy any more cars. And then I'll draw my bay-leaves and fade away."

"They don't give losers bay-leaves," said Mrs. Beaulieu.

"Don't they?" said Tudor quietly. "Look at *The Times*. Watch that little paragraph called *Wills and Bequests*. See what men who have mattered—not that I'm one: archæologists don't matter—possess in the hour of death. Then think what their lives have been . . . Labour, recognition and penury. Orders glowing upon a threadbare coat. Frayed linen, bus-fares, general servants—those things don't belong to people who've won their race. You see, you get your chaplet, or you don't, according to the way you ride. Where you finish doesn't count—with the world. But it counts with you all right, because you're human. Man has a weakness for finishing at least no worse off than he should be—for keeping at least the recognised style of his kind—for enjoying the dignity and comfort which belong to his class. Well, I've always lived like a gentleman. . . . That's why your invitation attracts me so. You're living like gentlemen: yet you've faded away. No doubt that's of choice, but you have. And I shall have to—very soon. But I can't just yet. . . . And so I must let this great opportunity go. As I've already hinted, I'm writing a blear-eyed book. I've been officially entrusted to compile the balderdash and so I can't throw it up. It's painfully puerile, but there you are. If you like to throw in your lot with a lot of crabbed buffoons, that's your look-out: buffoons or burglars, you've shared their mouldy counsels and you can't let them down."

There was a silence.

"How long will it take?" said Eulalie.

Pomfret shrugged his shoulders.

"About twelve months. Never mind. You must send me a card from Etchechuria—something encouraging, you know. A photograph of the gas-works by moonlight, for instance, or the Boy Scouts by gas-light. It doesn't really matter, so long as it suggests utility. And now I must go."

He rose to his feet.

"Look here," said Simon. "I'm not going to urge you to let the book care for itself, because that's a matter for you, but, as we're all going South and I don't imagine you're particularly pressed for time, why don't you join our pilgrimage? You can break away when you must, but till then—well, at least you won't have to carry your scrips."

Pomfret hesitated.

"You're awfully kind," he said, "but you've done enough. St. Justin——"

"Is ten kilometres," said Patricia. "And the beds will be occupied."

Pomfret stared at the caravan.

"From what you said," he murmured, "I gather it was built to take four. But I couldn't think of presuming upon a designer's optimism. If I may sleep in the curtilage—so that I can call if I'm frightened—clean my teeth not less than one furlong below the beer, and reappear in time to smear over the boots and serve breakfast. . . ."

"We'll give you a bed," said Patricia, "and then you can sleep where you like. If you think it's too cramped inside, the bed takes out and can go wherever you please. And when I've had my bath I'll whistle and you can come and have yours. Simon will lend you a dressing-gown."

"Mayn't I wear mine?" said Pomfret brokenly. "It's the only thing I really look nice in. It's got scenes from Æsop's Fables all down the back and the mark the hair-wash made on the left breast, and it's frogged. And it's never had an audience since the War."

"It was obviously made for Etchechuria," said Eulalie. "Can't you postpone the book?"

"Don't try to beguile me," said Pomfret. "It isn't fair. If you three were looking for a by-pass to Hell, I should certainly join in the search. The job doesn't matter: it's the company you do it in. But I'm not at liberty: I'm engaged—sworn to light such a candle of utter futility as no fool will ever take the trouble to put out, and nothing but death itself can release me from that. But if you're not being humorous, I'll hang about for a week. Don't bother about me at all. If you feel like giving me food, put some scraps under that bush: and if you should feel you must see me, talk audibly about beer."

With that, he picked up his suit-cases.

"Don't be absurd," said Eulalie. She pointed to Simon and Patricia. "There's the original firm. I blew in at Vendôme"—she hesitated—"at Vendôme, and two became three. Now three are becoming four."

"That's right," said Simon and Patricia.

"If," continued Eulalie, "if you really want your food put under that bush, we'll do it. We'll even strew it about the road, if you like. But it'd save us all trouble if you could eat it with us, and—and I think you might be Mess President and keep the accounts. Simon's no earthly."

"'Strew it about the road'?" said Pomfret weakly, setting his luggage down. "That's what I get for being humble. 'Strew it. . . .'" Oh, you disgusting child. And now I will be Mess President. Whether I shall eat with you I don't know. I think perhaps if you went to bed early to-night——"

"Neither do I," said Eulalie. "Listen. I don't do it now, but a month ago I was handling stolen jewels. In fact, if you called me a thief, I couldn't say you were wrong. And I didn't do it just once because I'd got stuck. It was my profession. That's how I lived and moved for thirteen years. . . . I don't expect you to pick up your stuff right now and go stamping away. I'm not so silly as that. But I like to know who I'm sitting down with, and I've no doubt you're the same. Because then one knows where one is and can look ahead."

Pomfret Tudor uncovered.

Then he stepped to the girl and took her small hand in his.

"Almost thou persuadest me to go to Etchchuria," he said.

\* \* \* \* \*

Patricia looked up from the map.

"Mont-de-Marsan," she said, "is exactly six miles."

There was a profound silence.

"I think," continued Patricia, "that Pomfret's the best one to go."

"My dear," said Pomfret, "nothing would prevent me, only I've earmarked to-morrow for meditation. Only yesterday——"

"I don't think," said Eulalie, "you should meditate in your sleep. I'm sure it's bad for the brain. I was watching you this morning—after breakfast."

"That wasn't sleep," said Pomfret. "That was a trance. It's very wonderful. Sometimes it takes me a little while to go off, but once I'm off I become oblivious of everything except my work. By the way, never disturb me if you see me like that. It's dangerous."

"I'm dreadfully sorry," said Eulalie. "I'd not the slightest idea. You ought to have told me when I woke you for lunch. But I won't to-morrow."

"No, don't," said Pomfret. "Just put something aside for me. Nothing much. More of a snack. A little cold duck and cheese and a few raspberries and some cake. And mind you cover it up because of the flies. They're a very irreverent lot about here. Which reminds me. Whoever goes

to Mont-de-Marsan to-morrow must get some muslin."

"It's no good," said Patricia, laughing. "You're for the high jump. Besides, six miles will do you a lot of good. And you can meditate as you go."

"Six?" cried Pomfret excitedly. "What do you mean? It's twelve. And I'm not allowed to——"

A gasp from Simon, who was reading *The Times*, cut short the sentence.

For a moment he stared at the paper.

Then he started to his feet.

"Listen," he cried. "Listen to this."

EMINENT ARCHÆOLOGIST DROWNED.

*It now seems unhappily certain that Mr. Pomfret Tudor, the eminent architectural archæologist, has perished. As previously reported in our columns, his car was discovered in the River Garonne on Monday last immediately beneath the bridge at Marmande, a small town in the Department of Lot-et-Garonne, which the unfortunate gentleman is known to have been investigating. It is believed that, while crossing the bridge, which is narrow, on Sunday night, either his steering-gear jammed or something caused him to swerve, with the result that before he could stop it the car had dashed through the parapet. In spite of dragging operations his body has not been recovered, but this is not surprising, for the current is strong, and it may well have been swept down stream, while there is a grim local tradition that the Garonne never gives up its dead.*

*A memoir appears upon page 14."*

In the midst of an electric silence—

"Read the memoir," said Eulalie.

"No," said Pomfret. "I protest. I'm sure you'll respect my wishes. No flowers by request."

Simon began to read, and Pomfret rose and strolled out of earshot.

When it was over, Patricia raised her voice.

"Come back, you great man," she said.

"I've something to tell you."

As he came up—

"What?" said Pomfret.

"Three things," said Patricia, rising and taking his arm. "The first is that we're rather prouder to know you than we were before. The second is that Mr. Wasley Crossgarter, whoever he may be, has been entrusted with the task of completing and editing *The Saracen in France*. And the third, that you can't possibly go back, because no man could ever live up to such a eulogy again."

Pomfret frowned.

"I wonder," he said. "And now I've got a new riddle. When is a threepenny newspaper worth seven shillings and sixpence? If you can guess it, I'll walk to Mont-de-Marsan."

"I know," shrieked Eulalie, "I know. When it's a passport to Etchechuria."

"A-a-ah," screamed Pomfret. "She's done it on me."

The three, however, took no notice at all. They had already joined hands and were dancing about him like fauns.

For a moment Pomfret regarded them.

Then he began to recite *The Inchcape Rock*.

*The third episode in this series will appear in the next number.*



## CORNWALL.

### THE EXILE TO THE EXCURSIONIST.

**G**IVE all my love to Cornwall:  
So long she mothered me,  
That half my thoughts keep flying  
Back to her friendly knee.

The whin-chats will be tattling,  
The larks all piping high,  
And the great pools all shimmering  
Beneath the moorland sky.

I know the gorse-starred roadway  
Still winds through that dear land,  
And the blue tides steal slowly  
Up to the clean white sand.

When Summer comes to Sennen,  
When morn is clad in mist,  
When Whitsand Bay shows emerald  
And tender amethyst,

Then think of one poor exile,  
And tell him, if you can,  
How fares it with Lamorna  
And with Saint Buryan.

Oh, when you take the coast-path  
And mark its zigzag bend,  
Or watch the sea-gulls wheeling  
About the wild Land's End,

Then as you sight the Longships,  
And as you glimpse the sea,  
Give all my love to Cornwall,  
And send her love to me.

FAY INCHFAWN,

*Author of "Songs of the Ups and Downs," "Through the Windows of a Little House," etc.*

# THE STORY OF A SANCTUARY

By FRANCES, COUNTESS OF WARWICK

*Photographs by Percy G. Lusk*

THE idea of a bird sanctuary came to me first very many years ago, when, an impetuous school-girl, I was delighted to get away from my patient,

part of the park as a house of refuge for all the harmless things that men pursue. Perhaps the Cities of Refuge of which I read in the Bible had something to do with the



EXTERIOR OF STONE HALL FROM THE GARDENS.

long-suffering governess, jump on my pony, and canter off to the woods. Even as a child I hated the shooting season, and took no interest in the house-parties that assembled in the winter to shoot the covers at Easton Park. I knew that if I lived I should some day have the deciding voice in these matters, and though I might not be willing to interfere with the sport of my husband and his friends, I would at least set aside a

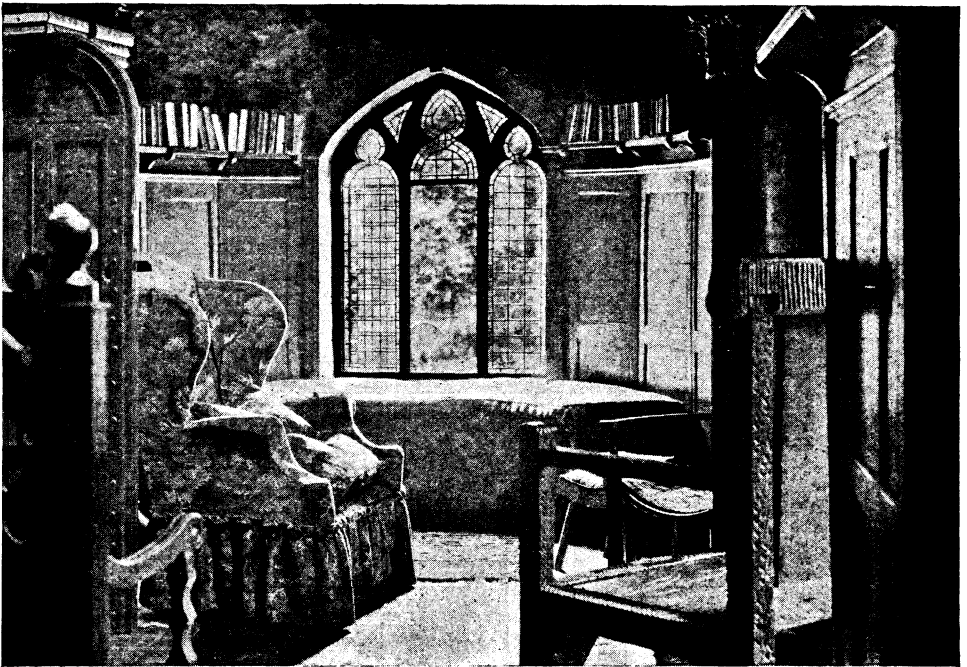
idea, for if men who had committed crime should have a place to which they might fly, why should not the pheasants and partridges, hares and rabbits, that were quite innocent, have some corner of the woods to which even the head-keeper should be forbidden to bring his gun, his dogs, and his snares?

In my rambles through the park I came across an old cottage of which the

foundations were stone, a cottage with a high vaulted room. It was remote from everywhere save the little village of Canfield, a mile or more away, and only those who, know the byways would find it through a maze of field-paths and hedgerows. Stone Hall, as the place was named, was a religious house in time of old. In all probability it suffered at the Reformation, as so many of our Essex abbeys and monasteries did. Even to-day, when some of the very spacious farm-houses are pulled down or rebuilt, the ecclesiastical origin of the place is revealed—in all probability it was transformed in haste to avoid destruction. I

who passed the last of their quiet lives in that woodland shelter, and then an under-keeper succeeded, and after a time—at the age of nineteen, to be exact—I married and claimed my inheritance, and began to deal with Stone Hall in the light of my own long-pondered wishes.

In the first place the old character of the house was restored. The oak beams were stripped, the panelling uncovered, and a garden was taken from the surrounding woodland so carefully that no tree that might be saved was sacrificed, and to-day, in the summer season at least, you may be within a few yards of the house and yet



INTERIOR OF THE LIBRARY IN STONE HALL, WITH ITS BOOKS AND OLD FURNITURE.

should not have thought Stone Hall could have been discovered even by King Henry VIII.'s Commissioners; perhaps the building fell gradually into decay, or the monks or nuns found the people afraid to be helpful or friendly. I can picture them leaving for more hospitable shores, and all the more perishable part of their home falling gradually to ruin. But as the stones at least were invulnerable, and the oak panelling and beams enjoyed Time's assaults, only the character of the place changed as it shrank in size. I think a hermit may well have lived there at one time, but my actual memory is of two harmless old ladies

not discover it. Having gone so far, I announced my further intentions. I would have a great sundial with gnomon of yew and hours in boxwood, I would have a Garden of Friendship and a Shakespeare Garden. Above all, garden and the wood surrounding it were to be complete sanctuary. I bought a badger and turned him out there, forgetting at the time, in my simplicity, that I should have bought a pair if I wished the harmless and much-persecuted animal to multiply. Foxes, hares, and rabbits needed no invitation, and though I was very keen in those days on the hunting field, loving everything but the

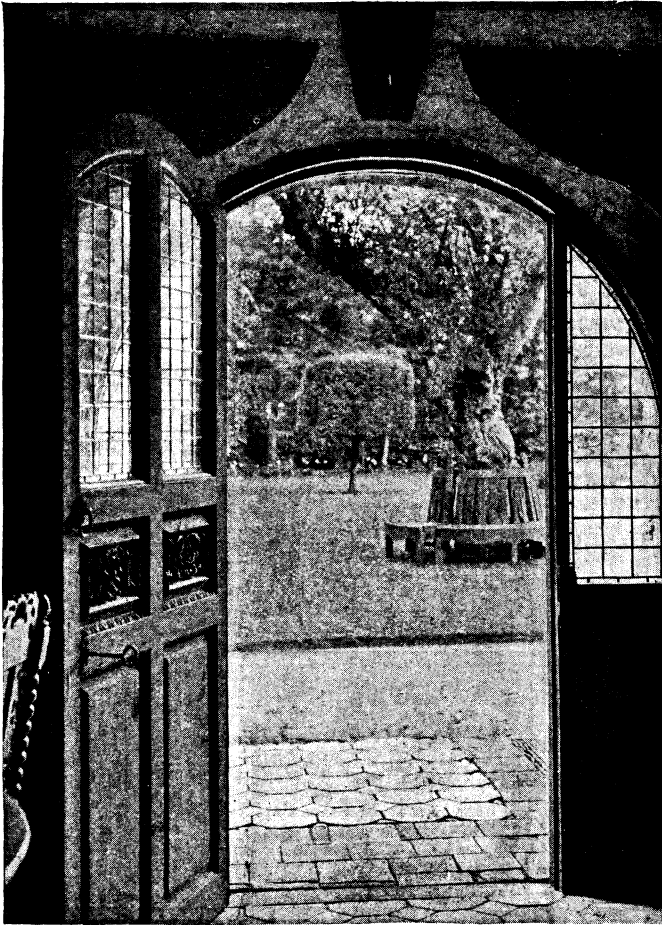
kill, and my woods were open to the hunt, that sanctuary was inviolate. Not even the pheasants might be driven out for the benefit of a shooting party, however distinguished. I wrote a book, or perhaps I should say an essay, on my Garden of Friendship more than thirty years ago, and I find, when I turn to it, that I mention the question of sanctuary there at a time when nobody seemed to realise either that wild

proffer ours. The bird and the beast fly or run from us only because we persecute them. The first bird that comes to my mind in this connection is the wood-pigeon. In the country it will not allow you to come within shooting distance; men must hide to destroy it, or join in "beats" over miles of country. But in St. James's Park in London this wildest of wild birds is as tame as the pelicans. I learned, as the years

passed, that the shyness of beast and bird is not of their making, but of ours, and in the woods that I kept apart from "sport," wild life went its way with very little heed for the stray visitor whose only purpose was to watch.

Through all those years my Garden of Friendship grew until it was full of trees and flowering shrubs and perennials, each with its name-plate to tell of the donor; but in making that garden I had forgotten one significant truth—I had overlooked, as we do when we are young, the swift passage of the years, the limits of our sojourn here, the chances of accidents of life. So it happened that when, after a few hours with my books in Stone Hall, I went to my garden at my favourite hour, the late afternoon, when all the birds are singing, I found constant reminders of dear friends who had passed on. In place of the peace and tranquillity, the keen sense of pleasure I had felt aforetime, there came flocks of sad memories, for Death had taken the young as well as the old, had stilled great brains and noble hearts, and

had brought rarest beauty to the dust. Gradually I shrank from that garden, gave no instructions for its maintenance, and so for some years it fell into disorder. Perhaps while we are still young we are rebels; certainly, as the journey lengthens, we tend to accept the duties and the troubles life imposes upon us with greater patience because we know that they are alike for all.



TO THE LAWN AND GARDENS OF STONE HALL.

life has any rights, or that a suitable place should be reserved for it beyond the reach of "sportsmen."

For my own part I confess to an ever-growing impatience with those who destroy life for amusement, and in so doing not only hurt the better part of themselves, but lose countless friends. I am in sober earnest when I declare that the wildest of wild things will give their friendship if we will





IN THE GARDEN OF FRIENDSHIP: FRANCES, COUNTESS OF WARWICK, AT THE  
SUNDIAL.

*The maidenhair fern tree in the centre of the background was planted by the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII.*



THE SUNDIAL IN THE GARDEN OF STONE HALL, FORMED BY A YEW TREE, AROUND  
WHICH THE HOUR FIGURES HAVE BEEN CUT IN AN EDGING OF BOX.

*In an extended circle surrounding the figures the following motto has been cut in the same way in box, "Les heures heureuses ne se comptent pas."*







THE SANCTUARY FOR BIRDS AND ANIMALS.

share it if they would, prefer to excite fear rather than confidence. I feel that if men and women would but enjoy the confidence that may be won, even for a little while, they could never turn again to weapons of

destruction; they would rather be despised for their inability to take life than be praised for their skill with shot-gun or rifle.

When W. H. Hudson, the naturalist, passed, when that long life, lightened through



AN INVITING APPROACH TO THE SANCTUARY.

many dark places by love for the younger brothers of humanity, came to an end, I thought it might be possible to establish the Stone Hall sanctuary on a more clearly defined basis. So, one sunny day in the summer two years ago, a few friends came down from Town and from the country round, and there, in the Garden of Friendship, Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, who was one of Hudson's intimates, dedicated the sanctuary to the memory of the great naturalist. The weather favoured us, the garden and its approaches wore their

this is as well, for they are becoming anachronisms, and have been for years past a burden rather than a boon. On the other hand, many of us have gardens, and there are plenty of public parks in which the establishment of a small sanctuary would serve a very useful purpose. We have to teach the young that it is an inglorious thing to rob a bird's nest, and we have to teach them, when they reach man's estate, that blood sports are indefensible; we can do this better by the aid of a sanctuary than by any other means. Let us interest



ANOTHER GLADE IN THE SANCTUARY, CARPETED WITH FLOWERS.

brightest colours in honour of the occasion, the birds sang with a good grace.

Naturalists and Nature-lovers will be welcomed. There will be a collection of Hudson's works in Stone Hall, and I hope and believe that many students will spend happy hours in the sylvan seclusion where, in times long past, devotees gave their lives to God and their service to their fellow-men.

I have not written this paper to deal in detail with my sanctuary, but rather to plead for an extension of them. There are few large landowners in England who could not establish one or more. Many have done so. But we cannot all own estates, and

the children, let us awaken them to a sense of the pleasures awaiting them when bird and beast welcome their coming and wait for their return. At present we have made a friend of the dog, the cat, and the caged bird, but how much better it would be if we had no birds in cages and all birds ready to hail us as friends!

No expense worth mentioning is involved in the upkeep of a sanctuary. When winter comes, I put up a few coconuts for the titmice, and spread a little corn. If snow is on the ground, it is necessary to increase the supply, because so many birds, too independent to visit me in ordinary times, forget their pride, and there is a scramble

for the wheat, the maize, the breadcrumbs and scraps. There is much waste in the average household even to-day when times are difficult, but I think I may claim that I have none. When a slice of stale bread will feed a couple of hungry rabbits or a dozen hungry birds, it must not be thrown away. When the spring comes, say from April on, wild life is self-supporting. With November it is necessary to be on the *qui vive*, and at the first sign of distress to render aid. Nobody knows how many of the birds we all love die of hunger when frost grips the land for a day or two. I

time to eat a coco-nut. Of the other birds that haunt our gardens, the robin will come and eat out of your hand, and several kinds can be brought to feed at your feet. I can remember how delightful the storks' nests are in Germany and in Holland. Sometimes the birds build on the roofs of the houses. Very often a cartwheel is set up on a pole to make a platform for their nest, and the children never interfere with eggs or young. It is thought a good omen if the stork sets up house with you. In the State forests of Germany nest-boxes are set up, and bird-nesting is practically unknown. Here,



SUMMER-HOUSE IN THE GROUNDS OF STONE HALL. DECORATED BY THE LATE EARL OF YPRES WHEN HE WAS COLONEL FRENCH.

know the number must be great, because I used to find the dead bodies when I walked abroad. It is a rare discovery to-day. Blackbirds, finches, robins, thrushes, scores of songsters that make our country life attractive, may die for lack of a little help just because we are thoughtless. What is true of the country is also true of the suburbs and the towns, and if any householder who possesses a garden doubts what I say, let him try a coco-nut cut in half and hang up each piece by a string from a fairly high tree branch. Then let him watch his visitors. Titmice take quite a long

if a stork does venture so far as our East coast, the first fool with a gun shoots it and writes a letter to the local papers that all may know of his passion for destruction. In hard winters we get rare visitors. Few escape with their lives. The law about the protection of our rarer visitors is strict, but unfortunately it is not enforced with rigour, and in the case—the rare case—of a prosecution, our county magistrates appear to regard the offence as a very trifling one, just as so many of them regard other forms of cruelty.

I fear we cannot educate the elderly;

we must begin with the young. We must interest and instruct them; give them sympathy, and forbearance will come. I was advised that school-boys might do damage in the park, and that the sanctuary might be desecrated. I am convinced that

this is not so. I take a pleasure in that thought that, years hence, some who are doing their best to protect another generation of birds and beasts may say that they learned their first lesson in that duty in the sanctuary at Stone Hall.



## THE LITTLE HILLS.

**I** HAVE seen the mountains stand up to greet the morn;

Their silver summits one by one do flash "Good morning" to the sun;  
But I love the little hills, the hills where I was born.

I have seen the level lands, the lands of crops and corn,  
And fair that golden mantle gleams, enriched with roofs and spires and streams;  
But I love the little hills, the hills where I was born.

I have seen the forests, of shadowy haunts forlorn,  
With beatings of mysterious wings, with foxgloves dreaming secret things;  
But I love the little hills, the hills where I was born.

I longed for the mountains, their shining slopes to climb;  
I sighed for the cornlands in the happy harvest-time;  
I dreamed of the forest, with dark trees tempest-torn—  
But I wept for the little hills, the hills where I was born!

VALENTINE FANE.

# BENEATH THE STARRY SKY

By CECIL B. WATERLOW

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

A LUXURIOUS limousine swept smoothly over the undulations of that lovely strip of pinewood and heath that lies just to the north of the Sussex downs. Sir Angus Kane-Seymour, O.M., F.R.S., was seated rather uneasily in its soft recesses, for the vehicle did not belong to him, and he was unaccustomed to such splendour. He had come from his little home in Chelsea that morning to the wayside station of Selling, at the foot of the South Downs, and the object of his journey was to give a lecture at some village hall under the auspices of the great lady to whose country residence he was now being driven.

The silent, splendid vehicle shone in the summer sunshine, dominating the narrow road, as though conscious, like its immaculately correct chauffeur, with his waxed blond moustache, that the country lanes and all the lovely landscape existed for nothing else but its sweeping, triumphal progress.

The great man was uneasy. He was a recluse, and Society hostesses had beaten in vain upon the doors of his little Chelsea fortress, into which none but the aristocracy of knowledge were admitted. He had been lured into this excursion on the pretence of serving the good cause of popular education. He, the world's greatest authority on spiral nebulae, was to stand and expound the mysteries of the heavens to village children and country folk who would fix him with beady, uncomprehending eyes.

The distance from Selling Station to Whitepit Priory, the country home of Sir George and Lady Alfield, was seven miles, so that a brief quarter of an hour sufficed for its transit. But Sir Angus was far more familiar with the distances of the nearest stars than with those between peaceful Sussex villages at the foot of the South Downs.

His estimation of the size and distance

of some mysterious star clusters in the southern celestial hemisphere had first brought him recognition at the early age of twenty-five. His brilliant theories have since been fully confirmed, as all the world knows.

But does all the world know, and does it care?

He knew enough to supply the correct answer, even at the age of twenty-five, now nearly twenty years ago. He had left the world to its own devices, and had just gone on, toiling night and day to unravel cosmic mysteries. When at last, after years of patient and devoted labour, he had arrived at an estimate of the total energy content of the universe, and had shown that it is not entirely subject to the second law of thermodynamics—that regeneration and re-creation must necessarily take place, so that the myriad suns of space are not doomed to extinction and death—when he had demonstrated this beyond cavil, then the wind of a wonderful new idea began to blow down upon the heedless world from the high places of knowledge. The popular press took up his vision with various crudifications and distortions that caused him some distress; but he became famous, and his works were translated into every language, whilst a host of lesser men set out to expound him in popular style divested of higher mathematics.

His body, still young, spare, and healthy, he regarded and treated only as a window through which he might look out upon the starry sky. His face gave the impression of being rather long by reason of the prominence of chin and nose and the height of the forehead, crowned by an ample crop of strong dark hair just streaked with grey. His profile was Grecian, and his grey eyes were usually dreamy, seeing only the light that comes from vast distances.

He was driven past the portals of the

park in which Whitepit Priory stands. The ancient monastery, dating from the twelfth century, had been modernised with all the art and science that money in our time can buy, for Sir George and Lady Alfield possessed between them a perfectly fabulous share of this world's goods, she having inherited millions of dollars and he having acquired much sterling by the manufacture of certain popular commodities.

The mellow beauty of the Priory doorway had been carefully preserved; rambler roses climbed over its grey stones; fuchsias, hydrangeas, agapanthus lilies and other subtropical flowers bloomed on either side, testifying to the sheltered warmth of this corner of the Sussex Weald. The gravel of the drive, the green lawns and herbaceous borders, sombre yew hedges and a lovely sundial about which pure white pigeons fluttered, every feature of the picture was harmoniously perfect, speaking to the discerning eye of wealth expended without stint.

But near the door was standing a small car, a cheap and dusty two-cylinder machine, out of keeping with its present surroundings, from which a young man had just emerged, carrying a handbag and two tennis rackets. He and Sir Angus thus met on the doorstep and were introduced together into the presence of Lady Alfield and her daughter.

Janet Alfield was twenty-three years old. She looked a little tired, not physically, for the bloom of perfect health was upon her, but mentally and morally. She seemed always to be searching for something that she could not find. She was very English—though she had kept a trace of her mother's American accent—and very fresh also; for her life of luxury, far above the cares and struggles of poverty, had not blunted her enthusiasms. She looked straight out upon the world—as much of it as came within her view—and her blue eyes, as they met those of any stranger, asked questions about it and about things beyond the world, as though she thought that every human being must have some special message for every other human creature.

The great astronomer was expecting, in this *milieu* of wealth and worldliness, to be greeted with that mock humility which says: "Your science may have made you a famous curiosity, but it is really as nothing compared to my knowledge of the social world, about which you are ignorant." He got a little of this from Lady Alfield, the energetic,

untiring, and philanthropic ruling spirit of the place, but from her daughter only the surprise of that simple, respectful, questioning look. He had met these ladies but once before, whilst the young man was obviously well known to them both. He was a struggling author whom Lady Alfield had taken up, because certain verses of his had pleased her in the highbrow periodical that had accepted them. He possessed all the ordinary social qualifications, danced, played tennis and golf passably, and dressed well, knowing that, being poor, he could not afford to do otherwise. He was known to his friends as Bobby, to those who read his verses as Vale Allen, and to others as Charlie Smith, which was his name. "Mr. Charles R. Smith" was printed on his cards, and he felt that it dragged him down. He owed his invitation to those verses of his, and he reckoned himself lucky to be at Whitepit Priory for the week-end with only two stuffy professors as rivals; for Dr. Vernon Field the famous naturalist, had also been invited, so that the celebrated astronomer might not feel too lonely intellectually.

The fact that Janet was a great heiress weighed heavily upon her, for wherever that searching glance of hers fell she found necessarily the same thing—ambition, calculation, and covetousness. But yet she searched; for at twenty-three the ways of life still seem broad and free, and "the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." She had read in a book by the late W. H. Hudson "in England . . . Society is like a huge Clapham Junction, with human creatures moving like trucks . . . on cast-iron rails, which they can only leave at the risk of a dangerous collision."

Her whole being was revolted by this dreary mechanical picture, which experience taught her was substantially accurate, whilst her heart insisted that it was untrue. She sought to discover and prove that it was false, that there was a safe line for her, leading away from Clapham Junction to great open spaces where the sweet wind blows upon the heath and misty blue hills sweep down to the sea. Alas, how egotistical! Yet she would always do anything in her power to help a friend. She was generous as well as hopeful. Moreover, she was twenty-three years old—getting on in years, it seemed to her. "Youth's sweet-scented manuscript must close," and, ere the closing, would she not be wise to take all that life offered?

She refused to admit fatigue into her

life : theatres and dances by night, followed by tennis, golf, riding and so forth by day in a never-ending round of social gaiety, might leave others limp and weak, but she was determined to make the most of her time. Every night when she retired to rest, no matter how late it might be, she always

"There is no object in Nature," he said, "except the propagation and multiplication of species. Creatures such as ourselves, who set up other objects in life, are fighting against blind but irresistible forces, and the result is likely to be complete extinction in the course of a few thousand years."

He was thinking of his well-known prophetic book "The Decline and Fall of the Human Species," and hoping that some of his listeners would say that they had read it. But his views were not considered suitable



"Janet enjoyed their company with an impartiality that was somewhat exasperating for one who was hoping and seeking to make a lasting impression."

read in bed for at least half an hour, so that intellectually she stood above her usual companions. Thus at lunch, which happened shortly after Sir Angus's arrival, she was able to hold her own with the two learned men.

Dr. Vernon Field had spent the morning botanising in the local disused chalk pit from which the Priory took its name, and the local insects had not omitted to cause him some discomfort.

by Lady Alfield for a village lecture, whilst there could not possibly be anything indecorous about the starry sky. Therefore the learned naturalist's mind was tinged with jealousy against his old friend Sir Angus.

Janet had no intention of allowing his gloomy views to hold the field during lunch. "In the meantime," she questioned,



"before the few thousand years are up, I should like to know whether Nature intends us to enjoy ourselves."

"Nature knows nothing of pleasure."

"I was hugely delighted when I won a tennis tournament last week; I'm looking forward with real pleasure to Sir Angus's lecture to-night; our chauffeur enjoys himself at the village inn; our head gardener, when he wins prizes at the local flower show, is the happiest man in Sussex."

"All unnatural! The penalty for such pleasures will be the extinction of the human race."

"You do not tell us," put in the poet, "exactly what we ought to do in order to avoid being extinguished."

"The human race is quite in the early phase of disobedience to Nature. Nature commands her creatures to satisfy her laws, and we want only to satisfy ourselves. However, she generally rewards obedience fairly promptly—with death."

"And yet you are said to be a lover of Nature!" added Janet.

"It seems to me," said Sir Angus, "that, according to you, I must be one of Nature's worst mistakes, because I dare to take pleasure in stars and things millions of millions of miles away from this poor little biosphere of ours, which you spend your life investigating and labelling."

The great astronomer was eating crushed raspberries and cream with obvious relish.

"And that we are going on," continued Janet, "from one futility to another. This afternoon we shall hit unnatural tennis balls over an unnatural net—or into it—on an unnaturally smooth lawn; and this evening we shall go and sit in a stuffy atmosphere—there'll be a touch of Nature about the atmosphere of the village hall—while Sir Angus drags us out of our natural environment on a trip round the stellar universe."

The learned doctor felt that this attack from a young girl put him in an unfair position, for he could not defend himself without transgressing the delicacies of polite conversation; but he found an unexpected ally in the poet, who, having hitched his waggon to a star, did not want to be told in too great detail what that star was made of.

"It seems to me," said Charles Robert Smith, "that Nature is an old cat, and that we are mice. She lets us play about for a little while in the sun and the wind; and

does it matter how we play, seeing that she is bound to get us in the end?"

"She claws you more violently," replied the naturalist, "if you do not play the game according to her rules."

"Which are——?" Janet questioned with grave earnestness. But Lady Alfield had had enough of this vein, and with easy dexterity she brought the great men off their pedestals by questioning them about their ability and willingness to play the unnatural game of lawn tennis, and discussing the arrangements for a little American tournament in the afternoon.

She was disappointed in the turn that the conversation had taken. She had hoped for the latest snippets about astronomical discoveries, which she could have stored up for use on future occasions in the presence of the great and learned. But Sir Angus was no marvel-monger.

After lunch Janet threw off her seriousness and set to work as usual to enjoy herself; and, being an adept at this art, she made it her first concern to see that other people were kept happy. The naturalist looked peculiarly unsuited to his environment in the white flannels that circumstances compelled him to don for the afternoon, because of the promontory which interposed itself between his nose and his toes. He, therefore, had to be put at his ease. Sir Angus and Mr. Charles R. Smith had a natural advantage, by reason of their slimness, which seemed to be altogether unfair.

Janet enjoyed their company with an impartiality that was somewhat exasperating for one who was hoping and seeking to make a lasting impression.

Determination is, of course, of two kinds—febrile, intense, but temporary; or perpetual and effective, like the waves of the sea. The young poet had come filled with the former kind.

He got his opportunity when Janet left the tennis-playing throng for a few moments to feed her pets. Accompanying her, he was well able to simulate interest in prize bulldogs, because their magnificent ugliness is always attractive to imaginative people; also there was around them the beauty of that rare and lovely thing, a perfect English summer afternoon in the country. The dark clump of beeches that marks Chanctonbury Ring looked down upon them through a hazy atmosphere that was luminous with sunlight. Never had the familiar Sussex landscape seemed more sweetly peaceful.

Never save once, ten years ago.

Janet told him about it. She was a child then, and she had been on Chanctonbury Ring with another child, the fairest and loveliest boy in the world for her, that little brother of hers. Together they had played and looked down over the blue vastness of the Weald, pretending to be king and queen of all that they could see. Even then, on that day that she remembered so well, he must have had typhoid fever upon him, for a fortnight later he was buried in Selling Churchyard.

Ten years, and it still seemed like yesterday!

His little life had been about the brightest thing that a mortal can experience, for sorrow had never come near him. She contrasted it with her own life. Then, very gently and carefully, the young poet compared both these lives with that which he was compelled to lead. He showed her how precarious was his existence; how his hopes and ambitions were constantly stultified, how both the sheep and the goats of this world herd against an independent spirit; and, especially, how lonely he was.

He received her sympathy, which was, after all, the utmost that he could expect for the present.

Then she began to talk about Sir Angus and his work. She had read those of his books which were comprehensible to the lay mind, whereas her companion had only read about them; but he rose to the occasion, extolling the sublime inspiration that had altered the whole trend of human thought, and condemning the grossly materialistic views of Dr. Vernon Field.

They returned to their tennis, which was followed by an early and hurried evening meal, after which there was an exodus to the village hall at Selling.

There was to be dancing after the lecture, and most of the county folk had come, as well as all the villagers. Consequently the hall was packed and its atmosphere was appalling. The magic lantern sizzled, and some members of the audience slumbered whilst Sir Angus spoke. However, he got the attention of a good few when he described most graphically the fearful conditions of extreme heat or cold that they would experience if transferred to the moon or the neighbouring planets, Mercury, Venus or Mars; how, for people on Venus, our earth and moon would shine gloriously in the midnight skies; how the length of days and years on these globes would be quite different from ours on earth; how

much heavier one would be on the planet Jupiter, and how the fattest man would be as light as a kitten on some of the minor planets.

Then he drew his hearers into outer space, calling upon their imaginations to outpace the lightning, to travel more swiftly than those electro-magnetic vibrations called light, by which we see the sun, the stars, and each other. Rushing through space with Lumen,\* he showed how the tide of time on the earth would be turned back upon itself, supposing the traveller still to be able to see what was happening in his headlong flight away from it; how everything that moved would be seen to go backwards; how old people would grow young before the traveller's eyes, and the dead return to life; how they would see the events of history unfolding themselves backwards, the battle of Waterloo appearing first as a stricken field strewn with dead; then cannon balls and bullets would be seen to fly backwards into the muzzles that had discharged them, dead men and horses would rise up and take their places in ranks that formed themselves afresh, until the opposing forces, perfectly intact, would be seen marching backwards from the battlefield.

And further yet down the ages they were made to see: back to the time when Christ lived on earth; and back far beyond into the history of the world, to times when vast, ponderous, and almost brainless Saurians ruled the land.

But Janet heard no more. Sir Angus had led her back ten years. With winged words and a clearness of description unusual in the great and learned, he had brought her down the path she had trodden until she was a child once more and played again with another child on the springy turf of Chanctonbury Ring. She could see the hairbells as they danced in the wind that day, her brother's blue eyes, happy and eager, and the glint of the sun on his hair.

The lecture came to an end. She did not hear about the spiral nebulæ, the curvature of space, the total dimensions and energy of the universe, or its self-contained, self-regenerating, self-repeating nature; and she was not the only one present who did not hear.

The lantern was extinguished; the lights went up, and people prepared to dance to

\* A philosophical abstraction due to the late M. Flammarion.

the discordant strains of the Selling string band. The young poet sought her out and said—

"What do you say to a little fresh air? A little turn in my car, just up on to the downs?"

To his surprise and delight she answered without the slightest hesitation: "Yes, please take me to Chanctonbury Ring."

About five miles of steep and narrow lanes led them to the open downs around the clump of beeches that is a landmark for all Sussex. But as they slipped through the outskirts of the village they saw some faint green points of light by the roadside, with a dark, bulky figure bending over them. They were glowworms, and the figure was that of Dr. Vernon Field, who had gone out before the end of the lecture, and was then thinking how much more interesting he could have been on the subject of glowworms than his friend Sir Angus on spiral nebulae. A few moments earlier he had seen a large car go by which looked familiar, and there were two persons, a man and a woman, seated in the front. In due course he returned to the village hall, where he found a certain amount of disapproval mingled with anxiety, not on account of his absence, but because Janet was nowhere to be found.

He reported what he had seen to Lady Alfield, and left it at that; but privately he had his suspicions. The chauffeur who drove the Rolls-Royce had looked to him like a person cast for the part of eloping with his employer's beautiful daughter. But the good doctor's knowledge of life was limited to

his view of the world as a biosphere which ought always to obey Nature's laws as discovered and interpreted by himself.

Lady Alfield was accustomed to treat the ideas of other people—especially scientific people like Dr. Vernon Field—as quite negligible where personal relationships were concerned; and, in this instance of the doctor's preposterous suspicions of her daughter, she was, of course, quite right. But Janet was not there; she could form no idea of the cause of her absence, and her anxiety was, consequently, becoming acute. Therefore she decided to make the learned naturalist show her the road along which he had lately seen one and perhaps two cars pass mysteriously eastwards, and to drive forth with him herself in her own two-seater that was waiting outside. The road along which they accordingly set forth happened to be the way to Newhaven.

Newhaven and the early morning boat for Dieppe were unpleasant thoughts at the back of the great lady's managing mind. The suspicion about the chauffeur she knew well enough to be ridiculous—the product of a mind profoundly ignorant of other people's lives. But could there be some phase of her daughter's life from which she had been excluded? Could there be some unknown power capable of spiriting her away?

They had not gone far when a large car



"Together they approached the seated figure. Janet looked at them with eyes in which there was no recognition."

loomed before them in the moonlight. There was not room to pass, and Lady Alfield had no intention of allowing the oncoming vehicle to go by. She stopped in the middle of the road, where her headlamps illumined her own Rolls-Royce, with her own chauffeur seated at the wheel and, at his side, a young woman whose name was Miss Ethel Oats, daughter of Mr. Robert Oats, who for twenty years had been proprietor of "The Red Lion" at Selling.

To Williams, the chauffeur, this meeting spelt ruin and disaster. He had yielded to his *fiancée's* insane desire to ride with him in a Rolls-Royce by moonlight, and his luck was indeed right out; for the chances had seemed to be millions to one against his being pursued and caught by Lady Alfield herself. To that lady and to Dr. Vernon Field, on the other hand, the situation appeared to be one of almost perfect propriety. The naturalist was furious. He demanded to know the whereabouts of Miss Alfield, but on that subject the chauffeur was blankly ignorant.

Lady Alfield made her decisions quickly, but, as



probability. She ordered Williams to drive her to Newhaven, relegating the Doctor, whose powers of deduction were now discredited, to the task of

"He was standing just over there," she murmured.  
"I could see the sunlight on his hair."

conducting Miss Oats back to the village. The learned naturalist, however, could not drive a car, so she decided to leave the two-seater on the roadside until her return. His walk with Miss Oats may have been extremely interesting, but he never referred to it, nor mentioned the fact that they had passed on their way a tall man, in a black coat, striding rapidly in the opposite direction.

The tall figure paused on seeing a derelict car by the wayside, waited a moment, looking round to see if anyone was at hand, then switched on the lights, pressed the self-starter, and sped along the dusty lanes, emerging, after the last steep, chalky climb, on to the smooth, firm turf that flanks Chanctonbury Ring.

Sir Angus Kane-Seymour could thus act as well as think. His eyes and ears, trained to afford him communication with distant, ultimate things, were extremely acute, and trivial happenings around him did not escape his senses. He had overheard Janet's request to be taken to Chanctonbury Ring, had seen her go out with the young poet, and had noticed that she looked strained and weary. However, believing that she knew well how to take care of herself, he had done nothing until the anxiety at her absence had become intense. Now before him in the moonlight he saw two figures up against the clump, the girl seated on the turf and the young man standing beside her. Near by was the little car that had brought them.

He feared no man. Time, space, and death itself—impostors all—had long lost their terrors for the greatest scientific intelligence of our age. Yet he hesitated, for here were two people, perhaps in heart and mind bound together by a force more powerful and mysterious than all the cosmic rhythms he had studied. Had he any right to disturb them?

To his astonishment the young poet ran forward on seeing him, expressing great delight at his arrival upon the idyllic scene.

"She asked me to bring her here," he said, "and now I can't understand what she is talking about. I believe she is in a trance or something."

Together they approached the seated figure. Janet looked at them with eyes in which there was no recognition.

"He was standing just over there," she murmured. "I could see the sunlight on his hair. He was picking hairbells just now; I saw him gather them."

"She thinks she has seen her little brother who died," said the poet. "She thinks she can see back ten years."

"Go for a doctor at once—not Dr. Vernon Field," said Sir Angus. "She is extremely overtired, and it may be dangerous unless she can get sleep, and plenty of it, soon. Tell him to bring—"

He made a note in his pocket-book, tore out the leaf and handed it to the unfortunate youth, who departed, pursued by the demons of shattered romance and dreams destroyed.

Then Sir Angus sat down beside Janet and listened in silence whilst she described her brother and the games they had played just there on a sunny summer afternoon ten years ago. Now the moon, just past the full, was high above them, and its light turned the dewy turf to silver, whilst the depths of the beech clump were inky black. There was absolute stillness and peace beneath a cloudless, starry sky. Over the rolling Weald lay patches of silvery mist, and the sapphire night was all about these two, alone upon the haunted hill.

He soon gathered that it was his lecture which had given a twist to a mind grossly overburdened, and so he knew how to proceed. He went over the arguments of his discourse again, which brought his hearer back to Selling village hall. Then he pointed out, named and described the stars above them, which made her realise that it was night.

"Quite soon," he said, "Venus will rise as a morning star in the east, just over there, behind the hills beyond Lewes. Is there not some legend about seeing the morning star rise on Chanctonbury Ring?"

"Yes. But how did I get here?"

He told her.

"Why did you come, and why has Mr. Smith gone away?"

These questions perplexed him, not because they were difficult to answer, but because they happened to make him look at himself—a thing that he did seldom.

Why, in the first place, had he been prevailed upon to come to lecture at Selling? To sow the seeds of sublime knowledge on somewhat stony ground: that was not quite true. Why had he followed Janet Alfield and the aspiring poet to Chanctonbury Ring? To allay his hostess's natural anxiety? That, again, was not quite true. Why had he sent the poet away at once? Because it was necessary that

a doctor should be fetched immediately ? Neither did that ring true.

Was there a mysterious prompter behind the scenes who, at life's crises, made one say and do and think things contrary to pure reason ? Dr. Vernon Field, he knew, would have described the prompter without hesitation ; and he shrank from such descriptions. What had they to do with the gentleness and beauty of Janet Alfield ? Was it not beautiful that she had been drawn up to this hill, that ruled the sapphire night, by the memory of her lost brother ? Might he not show her the true way of life that does not linger over the past, because the past never dies—because there is no death ? He might thus give her hope—the only medicine to restore the weary.

But youth has a way of reviving without medicine. She had soon recovered her normal point of view, and experienced only the unusual sensation of feeling very tired. For the first time in many years she desired to lean on someone. Her mother, whom she loved dearly, had never been for her a person on whom to lean ; but the man by her side, who could take the flaccid mind of the village idiot and show it the vastness of universal space, was surely a

man indeed. Her question remained unanswered, and she repeated it, like an examiner :

“ Why did you come up here ? ”

But she was not sure whether she was examining Sir Angus or herself.

“ I came for you,” he replied, and then there was silence until presently he continued : “ You have dragged me out of a rut, and I did not know that I was in it until now. But outside the rut I shall perish, unless you will help me to go on. Unless you are with me I shall be a man finished.”

“ I will join you,” she said, “ to the world that needs you so much, although you do not seem to know it. But now I am tired. I have never been so tired before.”

She went to sleep like a little child, for she had found what she had been seeking. He kissed the fair, childish head, then awaited the coming of a most unnecessary medical man.

The legend, if indeed it exists, might say that whosoever slumbers on the hill of hope, at the rising of the morning star, shall live happily to a great age and leave many descendants.



## THE UNWRITTEN SONG.

I ASKED of God with tears  
That I might sing again,  
And He Whose great heart hears  
The humblest strain

Sent me a little song,  
So perfect, rare and fair,  
I could not do it wrong  
In this dull air.

Ruffled and smirched by me?  
No ! here my merit lies—  
I set the winged thing free  
For lovelier skies.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

# THOMAS ROBINSON AND THE SERVANT PROBLEM

By HARRISON RHODES

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

THE parent Robinsons were going to Newport for a ten days' visit, and their son was to be left in the house at West Dunes. Thomas Robinson was not to grace the Rhode Island summer capital for the rather good reason that he had not been asked. The Davenports, who were to be Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Robinson's hosts, had possibly not seen our young hero lately, and so may not have known what an opportunity they were missing. Possibly at Newport young gentlemen of eighteen are not quite what they are at Southampton. All the Southampton people say that, by comparison, life at Newport is rather slow. To modest, quiet people like most of us existence at either place would, of course, seem of a quite intoxicating gayness. But it may be that in the Long Island airs the young more quickly take on a certain polish—this is not a question perhaps that anyone needs to decide. Of course young Mr. Robinson is an argument. As to the Davenports and the chance they lost of helping out the Newport season, we may think of them rather in sorrow than in anger. From now on in this story we shall quite ignore them.

This, indeed, is exactly what from the very beginning Thomas Robinson did. If their *faux pas*—we may at least call it that—hurt his feelings in the least, none of us, at any rate, will ever know it. It wasn't, naturally, that there were not plenty of boys from schools whose families had houses at Newport who would have been glad to ask him there. He struck at once, and very firmly, the note that it was his numerous agreeable social engagements which retained him in Southampton, loyalty to it quite apart. And he suggested, as much as a man could without impoliteness towards older people, that in a way it would be rather nice than otherwise having

the house and its resources all to himself, just as if he were a rich and hospitable bachelor with a decent country place of his own, which he might possibly be one day if he should decide not to marry.

"I hope you'll make yourself quite at home while we're away, Tom," remarked his father after dinner the night before they were to leave. He spoke gravely, oh, far too gravely for a man whose eye had such a twinkle in it. Nothing surprised Thomas Robinson about his father; he knew he was just incorrigible. "You know your mother and I want you absolutely to consider the house yours."

"Darling Tom, as if he wouldn't!" murmured his mother. The words were all right, but the tone was—if he were to criticise her, which of course he wasn't—almost too tender. It was, of course, all right when they were alone together. She was crazy about him, he knew, and so was he about her. But sometimes, in the presence of another man—she was just as crazy about his father, and yet she never let herself go on about *him* in quite the same way. Thomas Robinson wondered why. Perhaps women never grew up—at any rate, mothers. It was a question he would rather have liked to take up with some other boys if it could have been done with dignity. Dignity, while we are on the subject, was sometimes what his father lacked.

"Have some parties if you like, son. I think the servants can manage them all right for you." This was his mother.

"However," advised his father gravely, "I don't think I'd try dinners of more than fifty or sixty. I think they're bad style, anyhow."

Thomas Robinson gazed at his father with affectionate toleration. The fellow was amusing, after all, in his way.



"Have you heard that your going means that all the servants will go?" "Yes, sir. It seems sort of silly, don't you think so, sir?"

"In any case," the older man went on, "in order that there may be no doubt about the matter, I may mention that I'm taking the keys of the wine-cellar with me."

"Oh, father!" broke from Thomas Robinson.

His father grinned. He had an absurd air of one boy playing a trick on another.

"You want me to entertain like a gentleman, don't you, dad?"

"If you can do it on a half-dozen pints of light Sauterne, which I'll leave out, yes."

A half-dozen is always a half-dozen, though Sauterne is a very thin wine. But you could probably mix it with white grape juice, and it was undoubtedly best to compromise on that. But Thomas Robinson could not refrain from a shot at his parent.

"That will probably be quite enough," he said coldly, "as I shall ask very few fathers to my parties, and avoided by a dexterous turn a lunge that Edgar Robinson made at him.

"Have you any special instructions, mother? About the housekeeping, I mean."

"Oh, I don't think so," she answered.

"I wouldn't try to look in the corners to see if they are keeping them clean, or any-

thing like that, which they say good housekeepers do. Just tell the servants what you want and hope they'll do it. Don't ask very much, and don't utter a single harsh word. They might leave."

"Why, of course they'll leave, won't they, Clare?" Edgar Robinson spoke with repellent cheerfulness. "That's what servants are for, isn't it? I'd forgotten. But it's what I'm always overhearing ladies in Southampton tell each other."

"No, our servants don't *always* leave," said Mrs. Robinson judiciously. "In fact, they very often stay, if we're away a great deal during the summer."

"You'd better come to Newport with us, after all, Tom. I think you'd like it," suggested Edgar.

Thomas Robinson had really not thought it necessary to explain to them that he *had* planned one or two smallish dinners during the time that a certain Dora Deming—known, for a not very obscure reason, to fashionable American society in the teens as Dee-Dee—was to desert Newport for a visit to Southampton. It was certainly not the moment when he intended to quit West Dunes.

"Gee!" he said with some emphasis. "I'll keep the servants. I'll—I'll——"



To hesitate was, of course, simply to give his father another opportunity.

"They ought to have their own movies here at the house, I think, and not have to go down to the village for them," he began. "There are lots of abuses, when you come to think of it, Clare. I extremely doubt whether the new housemaid has her own motor-car yet, and there's no comfortable smoking-room for Brenton and Thomas and Philip."

He rambled on with amiable irony. There was a good deal of such talk along the south shore that week. It was the summer, you will remember, of the first serious attempt by American labour leaders to unionise domestic *employés*, as they termed them. On this subject no attempt will be made here to emulate Mr. Edgar Robinson's lightness of tone. Indeed, it is rather maintained that Thomas Robinson attacking the servant problem links himself with an important phase in the industrial history of his country. Quite as he should! We recommend his small story—though, perhaps, we shouldn't as tell it—to sociologists and historians, and to students of the humanities and of some of the smaller graces of life as well, and of the odd ways of a boy's heart.

"I read in the Southampton paper this morning that the organisers had been here, and that everything was ready."

"In a way, I don't exactly like leaving Tom to keep a house upon a sleeping volcano," said Mrs. Robinson.

"What shall I do, mother," said the speaker's son jauntily, "if I have a strike on my hands? Fill up with non-union labour at once?"

"Oh, Thomas, *whatever* you do, don't try to engage any new servants. Wait till I come back. If you must, just let them go. Live upon nuts or dine out a lot. Or anything. But don't start hiring servants."

The pledge was lightly given, but pledges with Thomas Robinson are never lightly held.

\* \* \* \* \*

Is it any use trying, in our narrative, to delay the rush of events towards the catastrophe which even the duller reader must have felt impending? The parent Robinsons left the nest at West Dunes on Tuesday, and early on Thursday a housemaid named Minnie decided to leave that night.

The news was brought to the master of the household in the library after breakfast.

Mr. Edgar Robinson was accustomed to smoke a rather black cigar in this room as he went over the newspapers, and now for two successive mornings Mr. Thomas Robinson, in his father's absence, had taken his ease in similar fashion—well, perhaps not quite his ease. Brenton noted, when he brought the ultimatum from Minnie, that the young master, as he received it, looked pale but determined. The butler had never happened before to see our young friend smoke a rather black cigar; he scarcely knew whether to attribute the whiteness and the rather grim look to the weed or to a notable fixity of purpose in such a domestic crisis. He made no comment, however, nor shall we, beyond saying that we hate to record any frailty in an otherwise so admirable character. Thomas Robinson, at any rate, quite firmly laid down the cigar as he went into action over the servant problem.

He vaguely remembered a youngish maid called Minnie. She had certainly meant next to nothing in his life, and he could not see that her going would in any way mean much more.

"Why is she dissatisfied, Brenton? Is she overworked, or underpaid, or what?"

The manner was crisp and decisive, quite like that of a virile "clean-cut" master of men in a short story. At times one can detect in Thomas Robinson a natural tendency to model himself upon heroes of whatever kinds.

"She appears to be satisfied with the place, sir."

(Thomas Robinson noted without dissatisfaction that Brenton, who had not invariably done so, now called him "sir," as he would have called his father. This was pleasant, because his relations with the butler had been rather on the informal side; in fact, two or three times, when rather pressed, young Mr. Robinson had borrowed—privately of course—from Brenton, who always seemed in funds.)

"It is, I would imagine, sir, a private matter, possibly of the heart, sir. I wouldn't say."

"It generally is with women, isn't it, Brenton?" suggested Thomas Robinson. This, although perhaps a rather grown-up and disillusioned speech, was not wholly unpleasant to make. Altogether, in spite of the *contretemps* of Minnie's approaching departure, it appeared not so disagreeable a thing to be left in command of a country house. But life changes its aspects with

singular facility. Brenton, in the next few speeches, clouded the sky.

"Shall I telephone through to the agency in town and have another housemaid sent down, sir?"

"Oh, no!" replied the temporary master of West Dunes. "I told Mrs. Robinson I wouldn't try to engage anyone new while she was away. No, we'll just go on without her till the family get back, Brenton," he added lightly.

"I shouldn't altogether advise that, sir." The butler's tone made our young gentleman—and his—look at him sharply.

"But you didn't understand me, Brenton. That's what my mother wanted."

"Madame probably didn't understand about the new Union rules."

"Union?" asked Thomas Robinson. He feigned ignorance, yet with a sickening suspicion.

"Yes, sir. We all of us went to the meeting last night and joined up. Now, you see, sir, we're pledged none of us to do housemaid's work. So if there ain't a housemaid, the house is undermanned—or under-womaned, sir, if you prefer it—in a manner of saying, and out we'd have to go."

"You don't mean that, Brenton?"

"I do, sir. I feel confident that would be the Union's ruling."

Thomas Robinson gazed at the courteous representative of labour with very wide and astonished eyes.

"But you all like the place and the wages."

He knew nothing whatever about the wages paid, but he shot in the air and assumed they were all right.

"All very satisfactory, sir. In fact, we should all wish to be re-engaged, sir, as we undoubtedly should be, seeing as how Madame would find it very difficult to find as competent a staff. We'd all come back, I feel sure, after the trouble is over."

"Then why have any trouble?" Here, of course, Thomas Robinson ranked himself with many distinguished economic thinkers. But Brenton, if you come to that, perhaps ranked himself with many leading labourites.

"In a way I ask myself that, too, Mr. Thomas. But perhaps a bit of rest just now, in the height of the season, *would* freshen us all up. I'd go for a week to Rockaway myself. You'll understand, sir, that for us such a place as Southampton is very slow indeed."

"Well, Brenton, it will be very slow for me if I've no one to tend to the house—very slow and very uncomfortable."

"I believe, sir, that's the idea of strikes. You understand me, Mr. Thomas, I don't overmuch want to go on strike, even though I do sort of hanker after Rockaway. But, just the same, there is a principle at stake. Lots of servants get very bad treatment from their employers, and if such of us as are well off don't help out the others who aren't—it's nothing personal to you, sir, nor to Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, and it's quite unexpected. But you can see, sir, that if we signed up only last night, we can't very well fail the very next day to 'come through'—if you'll permit me to employ an Americanism. If you want me to consult the manager, Mr. Miles, on the matter, I will. But I'm quite sure if you try to put Minnie's work on anybody else, we must all go out by Regulation—"

He pulled a small pamphlet out of his pocket. He and Thomas Robinson consulted it together.

"I see a good deal," the latter remarked meditatively, after a little while, "but not all. Now, for example, the scullery-maid, does she have to have *all* her time off, or can she be in sometimes and work—if she should want to?"

And then, with a very quick change of tone, as though he hadn't really liked his own joke, he went on:

"I see there's a lot of very tiresome things to do, things I shouldn't at all like to do in any circumstances."

"You're not used to them, Mr. Thomas, that's all." And Brenton looked almost kindly upon him, kindly, that is, for a prospective striker gazing upon an oppressive capitalist.

"Do you suppose, Brenton, that if I were to scour the kitchen utensils and do the servants' bathroom, that would make it any better? I *could*, you know."

"I dare say you *couldn't*, sir, without joining the Union. Besides, we shouldn't any of us like you to. We all of us know a gentleman when we see one."

"Oh, thank you, Brenton."

Such a compliment was most delightful to receive. And yet, though nothing more was ever said about them, the kitchen utensils and that bathroom haunted his imagination for days. He saw himself, in greasy apron, cleaning them, and he found himself wondering, in an embarrassed kind of way, just why people should be doing

disagreeable things for him, who never seemed to do anything but agreeable things, and to have people like him for it. We cannot claim that Thomas Robinson found an immediate answer to this question. But in any case we are wandering from our story. What he actually said at the very moment where we were was, and he put it to Brenton dubiously :

"Suppose you *do* telephone to town for a housemaid, Brenton, will you be likely to get one as good as Minnie?"

"I'm quite likely not to get one at all. It's the very middle of the season, sir."

"Then," announced Thomas Robinson, with a sudden change to enormous decision and masterfulness, "there's nothing else to it—Minnie must just stay!"

He did not at this critical moment confide to Brenton, who had, in a way, to be considered an antagonist, that one of the great reasons why this wretched Minnie must just stay was that he had already, for the following evening, asked a rather good party of friends to dinner before the Newboulds' dance. And the second great reason was that that party was for Dee-Dee—Miss Dora Deming, if you stick for formality. But when you come to think of it, if everyone else in the whole world, even the newspapers, speaks of her merely as Dee-Dee Deming, why shouldn't the reader?

Thomas Robinson wished that Brenton—and this Minnie, too, for that matter—could only realise how absolutely unrivalled and important Miss Deming was. Perhaps, as a matter of fact, Brenton would have known considerably more about the young woman in question than we might think. Perhaps he would have had his sources of information. Probably they all have. It is more than likely that they know about us all; but then it is flattering, isn't it, in a way, that they should take all the trouble?

Dee-Dee—if it is not to insult the reader to tell him anything about her—was one of the first very young girls in New York to become really famous even before she made a *début*. She was, indeed, a pathfinder in modernity. To hear some of the older women talk of her, you would think she had invented bad behaviour, yet before she was seventeen she went on the water wagon and stayed there. There is an incredible story of her at a rather too well-known party at Tuxedo, when, at the height of the gaiety—alas, slightly alcoholic—she

was discovered at four in the morning sitting quietly in the middle of the turmoil reading a volume of Emerson's essays. She was a creature of contradictions. At sixteen she created the vogue of the sub-debutantes who run New York Society.

To complete the picture, though Dee-Dee was manifestly no saint from Heaven, she looked exactly like one of Fra Angelico's angels. She had the same innocent eyes of celestial blue, the same tresses of pale yellow gold, and it has, perhaps, not been sufficiently noted by the art critics that these sweet Florentine angels were the first really attractive people to bob their hair. Old Mrs. Stanwix, who was eighty-five, and had been once the very leader of the innermost set in New York, would see little Miss Deming in the black-walnut furnished chamber where she lay bedridden, when she would see no one else, so there may have been something good about the child's heart, after all.

Not that anything of this much matters, since Miss Deming had charm and a prodigious gift of being the fashion. In the set graced by Thomas Robinson it is no exaggeration to say that *elle faisait la pluie et le beau temps*, to employ the pretty French phrase, she made the rain and the sunshine. That she shone upon Thomas Robinson was pleasant, but only what was to be expected, for he also had his vogue. An entertainment offered by him to Miss Deming had an almost official character—shall we say that an invitation to it partook of the nature of a royal command? And yet a mere housemaid named Minnie was threatening to upset all this fair structure of pleasure for some absurd, whining, womanish reason of her own. As Thomas Robinson thought of it all, any ideas of social democracy and kitchen utensils which he may earlier have had vanished. He simply felt class antagonism towards a housemaid who was spoiling his fun. He spoke again to Brenton sharply.

"This Minnie must just stay!"

"Very good, sir. Only I've requested her to, and she insists she'll go. She's packing her trunk now. Shall I send her to you, sir?"

"Oh, my goodness——" began Thomas Robinson, somewhat perturbed. Then: "Certainly—if you please, Brenton," he finished with absolutely icy coldness. And Brenton departed for the rebellious woman.

Left alone, our friend seemed somehow to feel the icy coldness and the perfect poise

ooze a little. He had not infrequently persuaded females to do what he wanted, but to command one—ah, that was a different matter, even if she were a mere housemaid! As a matter of cynical worldly wisdom, Thomas Robinson, of course, knew that the thing with women was to treat them supremely rough. Isn't that the shop-worn bit of wisdom, if it be wisdom, which every budding man is taught by his fellows? But Thomas Robinson, in the secret fastnesses of his soul, confessed to himself a weakness—he couldn't easily treat them just that way. For example, it was absurd, and unnecessary, to consider being rough to his mother. And to the others—well, he was, perhaps, a poor weak creature, and he had better begin with Minnie.

Of course there was no reason for his standing up and adjusting his coat, nor for his looking at his hair in the glass over the mantelpiece, though, perhaps, to be sure that one is perfectly well-groomed gives one confidence in dealing with even a housemaid. He went back to the large chair his father used, and lifted a newspaper with great dignity. The rather black cigar had by now gone out—well, perhaps fortunately. But a lighted cigarette gives a certain look of poise and self-control, and Thomas Robinson had a new amber holder which undoubtedly suggested the world and a real competence in dealing with it.

The annoying thing was that as Minnie slipped in at the door he forgot that she was only a housemaid, and, automatically it was, rose at once to his feet. Of course he realised almost immediately that he was wrong, and tried to conceal his *faux pas*, not by sitting down again, which would have given the show away, but by pacing up and down with his hands clasped behind him, which he hoped might give the impression of a strong though caged panther.

Finally he stopped—well, he had to at last—and turned to her as if he were coming out of abstraction over some big financial operation, perhaps, and looked at her—fiercely.

Perhaps that frightened her; at any rate, when he finally saw her, she did not look menacing at all, but rather shy and as if she had had to screw up her courage for the interview. She was a mere wretched slip of a brown-haired thing—indeed, she looked not much older than Thomas Robinson himself—and he saw with horror that she had dark blue eyes rather the colour of a hyacinth. Statistics, of course, show that

hyacinth eyes are quite as frequent among domestic *employées* as among domestic employers. But our young man had never seen these statistics, possibly neither has the reader. The discovery took him by surprise. And the horror above indicated was genuine because he saw at once that it was going to be quite impossible for him to treat her very rough. His heart sank. And yet he knew he must begin somehow.

"Brenton tells me you want to leave to-night."

"Yes," she murmured. He noted that her cheeks looked as if they were stained with tears. The thing was intolerable—and unfair.

"What's wrong?" he asked. He was becoming exasperated.

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing? But there *must* be. Is there anything wrong with the place?"

"No, sir."

"Has anyone—any of the other servants done anything or said anything?"

"Oh, no, sir, they're all right. I just want to go, that's all."

"Don't you think that I deserve to have a reason given me? Have you heard that your going means that all the servants will go?"

"Yes, sir. It seems sort of silly, don't you think so, sir?"

"It seems simply disgusting to me," said Thomas Robinson. "Disgusting!" he repeated. The sound of the word gave him courage. "It will ruin a party I'm giving to-morrow night, and so, as you have no reason for going, I must insist on your staying."

He tried to take up the newspaper as if that had settled it, but by a kind of hollow feeling inside he knew that nothing was settled. And a conviction crept over him that at any moment Minnie might cry. And yet, such is the folly of the male sex, he went on making it worse.

"You're being quite unreasonable, Minnie. Don't you know enough about being a servant to know that you can't do this kind of thing?"

"No"—and she lifted her head for an instant almost angrily—"I *don't* know much about being a servant, and I don't want ever to know anything again." And suddenly the flash of anger passed, and then, oh, Heavens, just as he had instinctively known she would, she began to cry.

There was an instant's silence, then the

boy, with a quick revulsion of feeling, spoke slowly.

"If I hurt your feelings by calling you

"Oh, no, Mr. Tom," she said quickly, though she didn't turn around to him.

"It's nothing. Everything's my fault for



"How about him?" And he jerked his head at Thomas Robinson. "Me?" exclaimed that young gentleman in considerable astonishment. "Yes, you!" replied Mr. Gregory."

a servant, Minnie, I apologise. I guess I didn't think. And if there's anything else I've done——"

being silly, I suppose. But I can't stand it any longer, being a servant, and I won't."

"I don't understand——" he began.

"No, I don't suppose you do. You have never been a servant, have you?"

older people sometimes, talk to about their affairs. And I'm sort of understanding, and very safe."

She shook her head. "You're very kind, sir, but I don't think I can."

"All right," answered Thomas Robinson. And there was an instant's pause, during which, we must do him justice, he quite forgot for the moment that his business was to induce a housemaid to stay so that he could give a party on the following night. He just thought how embarrassing it was

to be young and not to know always precisely what you ought to say, what would be right.

"I wish"—he hesitated a little; certainly the confidence with which he often spoke was not there—"I wish my mother were here, Minnie. Everyone can always talk to her—about anything—but you know if you think you want my advice, or if you think I could help— Perhaps I could understand"—he searched for words, but found nothing better than—"because I am young myself."

It seemed odd to him at the time that he should be talking this way to Minnie. But when you came to think of it, what other way of talking to a girl was there? Thomas Robinson was not wholly lacking in powers of detached self-

analysis. He wondered even then if he were behaving this way because Minnie had eyes like wild hyacinths. It would be a pleasure to confirm him in his suspicions, to assure him that since the beginning of time—and probably to the end of it—things have happened just because young women have eyes like flowers, and that this is perhaps one of the pleasantest things about the world. If you troubled to investigate the matter historically, you would very likely find that King Cophetua's beggar-maid had eyes very like Minnie Connelley's, and certainly, for their sake, he went much further than it even crossed the mind of Thomas Robinson to go. But Cophetua, it must be remembered, did not know Miss Dora Deming. Dee-Dee might have made a difference to

"A whirlwind of pink chiffon and golden bobbed hair and pretty pink shoulders."

You never had anyone turn you down flat because you were, had you?"

Certainly he hadn't, and odd new vistas in life suddenly seemed to present themselves for his thoughtful consideration.

"I don't know that you'd want to talk about it, Minnie, to me, but perhaps you don't know it—I am very often the kind of person that people, even very much

His Majesty. But even Dee-Dee was not much in Thomas Robinson's mind at that moment. Again he was experiencing the rather painful feeling which had before warned him that Minnie was about to cry. And Minnie did cry again, just a very little, but now she told her poor little story. It isn't much.

She had met the young fellow, whose name was George Gregory, and who was in Crouch and Crouch's real estate office down by the depot, at an Eastern Star dance at Cumberland Hall the Saturday night before. As a matter of fact, Minnie had gone only because she had found two tickets for it in the waste-paper basket when she did Mrs. Robinson's room; she supposed that Madame had *had* to buy them, and hadn't thought of anything better to do with them than throw them away. She hadn't planned to go really, but her and one of the other girls—Minnie's grammar—was down to the movies that Saturday night, and they just looked in. They were rather late.

Minnie met young Mr. Gregory just by chance like, and then, somehow, it hadn't seemed as if it could have been by chance at all, but must have been foreordained in the stars since the world was young. Not that she put it to Thomas Robinson in such a phrase. She only hinted at it—may we say young-and-shyly? And Thomas Robinson guessed at what she meant in like fashion.

She hadn't told him much about herself, just strung him on, perhaps, she said. But they'd somehow arranged that he was to take her to another dance at Cumberland Hall the next Saturday. That would be to-morrow evening.

He had walked with her down the lane to West Dunes.

"And when I turned in at your place, Mr. Thomas, I knew all of a sudden he hadn't realised that I might be just a servant. He said 'Good night' nice enough—well, he kissed me, I don't mind admitting that—but I knew then it was 'Good night' for me."

"Dirty dog," commented Thomas Robinson, half to himself.

"No, sir, I don't say that." She smiled, but she suddenly looked older, more tired, and oh, so much wiser than the lad she was talking to, she a mere girl herself.

"He has to think of himself, that's all.

See, he's in a real estate office; he couldn't be seen going around with servants, could he?"

"Perhaps not," answered Thomas Robinson abstractedly. Here, indeed, was a whole set of new facts presented to him. Perhaps they'd always been there, but he'd just never seen them. Has it ever been mentioned that Thomas Robinson was a very fashionable person? The social outlook upon life is in some ways much simpler when you happen to live somewhere near the top of the pyramid. He and his father and mother always seemed to know everybody, and everybody seemed glad to know them. Is this democracy? Probably not. Thomas Robinson was certainly not conscious of looking down upon anyone, but he had the great advantage of never being conscious of anyone's looking down upon him. That he saw, with an odd kind of boyish lucidity, would be quite intolerable, to be looked down upon, and wrong, and not very American. There is no aim here to present Thomas Robinson as a thinker, but for all his engaging small poses there was a curiously pellucid quality to both his mind and his character. If you like it put more simply, he was an awful good kid.

"Well," he asked a little gruffly, "what's he going to do about this dance at Cumberland Hall to-morrow night?"

"He sent me word by the bakery boy this morning that he was afraid he wasn't going to be able to go."

"Minnie," cried young Mr. Robinson, "he's just a cad, that's all! I'd like to go down to Crouch and Crouch's and simply knock the stuffing—I would if it wouldn't look——"

He suddenly stopped and flushed. What had he been about to say? That it wouldn't look well for a young gentleman like himself to be rolling in the Southampton dust with a clerk from one of the village offices?

"You see, sir," Minnie cut in quickly and with some sharpness, "it ain't just his fault. It's my fault for being a servant, I suppose. Or it's servants' fault for existing, perhaps. You'd think we could be decent and not under everybody's feet. There's something wrong somewhere, Mr. Tom, and let me tell you, unless something's fixed different, there ain't going to be any girls will be servants any more, and I'm going to be at the head of the procession."

"All right, Minnie," said Thomas Robinson, "we'll have it fixed." There was a twinkle in his eye, but we think there was

also something else. Young Minnie was too hot to notice it.

"All the same, George Gregory isn't a gentleman, Minnie," he added reflectively.

"Oh, go along with you, sir! Could a gentleman at Southampton or anywhere else be seen at a dance with a servant-girl?"

"Oh, I don't know about anywhere else, Minnie," he answered very slowly. "At Southampton, yes!"

Things of this sort seem to happen in life just like that—suddenly.

"You may not be good enough for Mr. Gregory, but you're good enough for me. I hope you'll go with me to-morrow night to the dance at Cumberland Hall, and we'll see what he'll say then."

Of course, if young gentlemen of eighteen knew how becoming it is to hold the head proudly erect, to have the eyes sparkle with a generous purpose, they would make such speeches oftener—it is unbelievable how handsome they look while doing so. Perhaps Don Quixote did when he chose the simple country girl to be the fair Dulcinea del Toboso and his liege lady.

"Do you mean it, sir?"

"You bet, Minnie."

"But you've a party of your own on hand to-morrow night."

"I'll have to get rid of them."

"You don't need to till ten. You see, I'm staying now so that us servants can get it up for you."

"Why, yes, so you *are* staying, Minnie. And the strike's off. I'd forgotten that." He slapped his leg gleefully.

She had one second more of hesitation. "You're sure it won't get you into trouble?"

"With whom?" he asked severely.

"Well, your family."

"I'm doing exactly," he replied with rather an air, "what my mother and father would wish me to do."

"All right, sir."

At the door he stopped her. "I say, Minnie, I hope you've got a pretty dress."

She turned and laughed, not a bit like a housemaid.

"That I have," she said, "pink!"

And with that she slipped through the door.

\* \* \* \* \*

At about 10.21 the following evening Miss Dora Deming withdrew herself a little to the end of the sofa upon which she and Mr. Robinson were seated. She was delivering an ultimatum.

"Very well——" she began. It may be observed *en passant* that there are so many crises in life in which, when people begin that way, it means that things are not well at all. "Very well, if you won't come to the Newboulds' party and you aren't ill, or about to die or anything like that, it is simply because you're going to another party that you think is going to be a better one. No, don't say a word. I know boys."

It is probable she did, though she had had a scant eighteen years in which to acquire the knowledge.

"Of course," she went on, "I've probably never been so insulted in my life. But I shall forgive you, because I'm simply crazy about you—this week. I'll let you take me to the other party."

It was put in the odd new manner of the twentieth century, but Thomas Robinson knew quite well that it was a royal command. Here, indeed, was the moment now come when for Dulcinea and his Quixotic adventure he was to pay the price. For one instant Thomas Robinson hesitated. He wondered whether, after all, to be about to die wouldn't be the easiest way. He looked—for the last time, he felt sure it was—upon that golden bobbed hair and into those Fra-Angelico eyes. He considered—for he was a man of the world, too—that she was going to be the very most popular *débutante* next winter, and that she had said, though unfortunately not before witnesses, that she was crazy about him—this week. It was a moment of renunciation such as he had scarcely expected would come so early into his life. And yet, according to his boy's code of honour, there was but one way to act.

"I am awfully sorry, Dee-Dee, but I'm engaged to take another girl," he said, and if he had been struck dead by lightning on the spot he would not have been surprised.

But Miss Deming replied with a terrifying sweetness of which only her sex is capable: "Oh, I didn't know there was any girl except me, Tom."

"There isn't——" he began desperately, and seemed to be making efforts to seize her hand.

"You wouldn't like to tell me where the party is, I suppose. I might get someone *nice* to take me."

He shook his head. Why make bad matters worse? Did she not hate him enough already?

She had risen in her outraged dignity and stood looking at him. Curiosity, anger,



all sorts of odd emotions played about in her eyes.

"Well, good-bye," she said. "You have surprised and interested me very much. In fact, I'm glad to have known you." And she turned upon a white satin heel and was gone.

Thomas Robinson, of course, felt desperate, although he had never cared deeply for Dee-Dee; she, however charming, had been, in a way, only a man's caprice, he admitted to himself. Thomas Robinson was introspective enough to know that his heart was somewhat seared with the experiences through which he had already gone, and that he could never again really care for anyone with that lightness and facility which he observed so often in boys perhaps less developed. The situation became, once she had gone, easier, though pleasantly dramatic still. He strolled through the deserted rooms, and in the dining-room drank a glass of the cup which Brenton had concocted from the famous six pints of light Sauterne. He meditated, as he lit a cigarette slowly, that, of course, as a result of to-night's daring and unconventional affair, he might in the future live a good deal apart from society, rather like a hermit. It might, perhaps, be on an island of his own in the South Seas, where he would, however, always dress for dinner and have an exquisite vintage cellar to which his father would not have the key, but from which he would produce a cobwebby bottle of the rarest wine and serve it to the astonished stranger who should chance upon his solitary kingdom. Such thoughts made the future seem more tolerable.

Then in the hall Minnie appeared in the pink frock. At that, as she had said herself, it was an extremely pretty one. For an instant Thomas Robinson had a wild idea that he would take her on to Mrs. Newbould's, as a visiting girl from, perhaps, Syracuse, but he saw at once that this would fail of its effect upon Mr. George Gregory. It was, indeed, only by thinking of this cad that Mr. Robinson managed to remember that housemaidship, if that is the correct word for it, was his companion's habitual employment.

"Am I all right, sir?" she asked timidly, but with that same air that he had before noted in girls, of being quite sure they are all right.

"You're a winner, Minnie!"

"Do you think *he'll* think so? I hear he is going to the dance, sir."

"He'll think just what I do," answered Thomas Robinson.

It was really the oddest thing how, though of course he was taking her to the party just for George Gregory and everybody to see that a gentleman was not a snob, her own attitude should be so *thoroughly* impersonal toward him. Of course it was much better that it should be this way, and of course she didn't know that he had broken off what might have been a lifelong friendship for her sake. He was, nevertheless, rather glad when she suddenly turned to him and said:

"You sure are some dresser, Mr. Tom. You look lovely. And I hear you're a great dancer."

"I'll bet *you* are, Minnie."

And, laughing, she replied, rather as she had once before: "At that I am."

Somehow this was better. He caught her hand, and they raced down the hall and out into the starlit night.

The primrose-yellow car plunged gaily forward on its adventurous way to Cumberland Hall. Neither Thomas Robinson nor Miss Connelley, who had once been a housemaid, probably noticed a low, rakish craft, painted black and with the headlights out, which lay just by the hedge around the corner of the entrance to West Dunes. This is not an attempt to put a melodramatic note into the story, but the other car *was* there, and it can do no harm to say so before we go on to the dance.

Tennyson never tells us whether that fellow Cophetua—funny name, isn't it?—jazzed with the maid, or whatever may have been then or is now the phrase for taking the most pleasing, quivering steps, to the great satisfaction of everyone in Cumberland Hall. Thomas Robinson would never have guessed that so many people in the Hamptons knew him. While Miss Connelley, as he had now discovered she was, was checking her coat, before they went on, he had already seen Slepper, Mrs. Newbould's head chauffeur, who had grinned at him and said: "Thought you'd be up to our dance to-night, Mr. Robinson."

"Why aren't *you*?" was the answer, with a gay smile.

"It's the only time Madame ain't out herself, when she's giving a party," said Slepper, and grinned again.

Minnie danced beautifully, though in a perhaps more restrained manner than Thomas Robinson was accustomed to in fashionable *débutantes*—it probably came

from her not being quite a lady. But the music was good, and something perhaps of bravado brightened the colour in their young cheeks, and made them hold their pleasant young heads high for all observers to see exactly what was happening. Thomas Robinson could not have said what almost imperceptible movement of pride, what faint stiffening in the soft young body that was in his arms, made him positively know that in the corner they turned, just after passing the music, was the quite unspeakable cad George Gregory.

When the instinct that hardened dancers acquire made them know that this fox-trot was about over, they stopped by mutual, if unspoken, consent quite near the band—and the corner where the cad was.

Minnie manipulated a fan with all that air of indifference which Thomas Robinson, at certain crises, could bring to smoking a cigarette. Her colour was still high, and her laughter almost merrier than even her partner's very witty conversation would have seemed, to an impartial listener, to justify. Then quite suddenly, and with oh, such astonishment, she saw and recognised Mr. George Gregory.

"Oh," she cried, "you!" and held out her hand, while he sheepishly came forward and took it.

"I'm glad you were able to come at last," she said, with great elegance of manner. "What was the matter with you, Mr. Gregory? Your brains? I want you to meet Mr. Robinson of West Dunes, the house where I work, you know."

"How are you?" replied Mr. Gregory, but he did not offer to shake hands.

"He isn't ashamed to be seen with me here," continued Miss Connelley. "Don't it jar you a bit to see how a gentleman behaves?"

"Where'd you get that 'ashamed'?" muttered Mr. Gregory in a very low voice. They had now, it may be said, withdrawn a little from the general crowd into the corner under the balcony.

"Well," he went on, "perhaps I didn't treat you any too swell. But how about him?" And he jerked his head at Thomas Robinson.

"Me?" exclaimed that young gentleman in considerable astonishment.

"Yes, you!" replied Mr. Gregory. "What sort of an idea of Minnie do you think it gives people for the boss's son to be seen lugging her around to dances at Cumberland Hall?"

"Could you," asked young Mr. Robinson, very pale, "make it any clearer the kind of idea you mean?"

"Mind your own business, you."

There was a good deal of difference in the manner of these two young men and in the intonations of their voice, but singularly little in the glare in their eyes as they faced each other.

"It is my business," replied Mr. Thomas Robinson, whose face, in spite of his great suavity, had gone from pale to crimson, "to protect the lady I am escorting from insult, and if you'll step outside we'll see what can be done about it. I am not quite sure," he added courteously, "that I can do it, but I'll try to give you a darned good beating up."

Was it a similar, though unacknowledged, uncertainty as to the probable results of combat that made young Mr. Gregory hesitate just the fraction of a second before answering, "All right, come on!" There is no way of knowing. They started towards the door.

It is unpleasant to write of so perfectly appointed a creature as Thomas Robinson brawling, yet this was inevitably about to happen if at that moment a whirlwind had not burst upon them—a whirlwind of pink chiffon and golden bobbed hair and pretty pink shoulders and a seed pearl necklace that had been worn by old Mrs. Stanwix when she danced with that earlier Prince of Wales.

"Thomas Robinson, beloved!" exclaimed Dee-Dee. "You see, it's as I told you—I *always* go to the best parties."

Miss Deming is the kind of a person who, if she ultimately gets her own way, bears no ill-will at all towards those who earlier tried to thwart her. She beamed with almost seraphic affection upon our slightly dazed young friend.

"Introduce me," she commanded.

"Miss Minnie Connelley——" began Thomas Robinson, but he was interrupted.

"Mr. Robinson's a prince, miss, as I could tell you if you wanted to hear the story. Mr. Tom, I don't want to make any more trouble for you or anyone, but I don't want to try to pass myself off for anything I ain't. May I tell her who I am?" asked Minnie.

It may be that Thomas Robinson had not quite settled that he would explain who she was so soon, but he answered very quietly: "Certainly you may."

"I'm his mother's housemaid at West Dunes, that's all, miss."

"A housemaid!" exclaimed Miss Deming.

There was something almost pleasant in getting the world's verdict so soon, in knowing that he would go back home that night a *solitaire*.

"A housemaid!" cried Dee-Dee again. "How absolutely perfect! How wonderful! Oh, Tom, you're a very great man—you've found something perfectly new, and I was getting so bored. I shall telegraph mamma to-night to have the gardener's boy at Newport measured at once for evening clothes. He's tall and blond, his name's Svensen. Perhaps you'll come back with me—oh, may I call you Minnie? I think you'd like Newport—it's rather nice in August. It seems to make the world all right, too, doesn't it? We do what we can, don't we, Tom? I just *love* the people. I always have. And I think this is absolutely too *chic*! I worship you, Thomas Robinson. Who is that?" she asked suddenly, and fixed her glittering eyes upon Mr. George Gregory, who was by now absolutely beside himself with mingled terror and joy at the vision of high life which was being vouchsafed him.

"Are you the furnace man?" she inquired of him in almost caressing tones. "Oh, I do hope you are, because I'm rather crazy about you for the next dance."

"I'm only a real estate agent, miss, but I'd like to dance," he stammered out.

"Only a real estate agent!" Dee-Dee rattled on. "You're perhaps the sort of fellow who'll rise to be a furnace man. Meanwhile, of course, I'll get everyone in Southampton to buy houses through you. But don't you think being a furnace man is much finer, really? To do something with coals, you know. That's the real sort of thing in the future, I'm sure. And if you were really a crackerjack furnace man, you could—well, I'd be beneath you, of course, but you could aspire to my friend Miss Connelley's hand."

Dee-Dee stopped. It may have been for lack of breath, though there is no historic

record of any such thing ever having happened before. It may have been that she, being a woman as well as a Fra-Angelico angel, felt something in the air. Mr. George Gregory gulped hard.

"I guess I aspire to her hand as it is."

"Oh, George," cried out that young woman, looking tearful, yet happy somehow, "don't say that sort of thing unless you mean it!"

"Not before witnesses, anyhow, George," said Dee-Dee, gently enough, though with a little laugh.

"Oh, I mean it all right," said the young man grimly.

Thomas Robinson held out his hand. "In that case I apologise for everything I said."

"Oh, I'll do the apologising. It was pretty white of you bringing her here to-night. I get you now, Mr. Robinson, and I guess I needed the lesson."

"Listen, kid," half whispered Miss Deming, plucking at his sleeve and addressing our hero—we will not deny the fact that he is that, in this undignified way—"you'd better take me to the Newboulds', after all. We're not awfully wanted here."

"Do you suppose, Gregory, you could see Miss Connelley home to-night?"

"You've said it," said George, and grinned.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I was going to try to fight him, Dee-Dee, but I'm glad I didn't have to. You never can tell," confided Thomas Robinson, after they had arranged to be engaged for at least the rest of her stay in Southampton.

"I hate bantam fights, anyway," said Miss Deming. "But when you're grown up there isn't anything in the world—not just fighting only—you won't be able to do. And it will all be sweet and like you, Tom."

She raised her flower-like head and ever so lightly—oh, really lightly!—touched his cheek with her pretty childish lips. And he only smiled in return.



# THE POT-HUNTER

By G. B. STERN & GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLIER

"I'LL go straight through to Genoa," Richard Spurnville Carew determined, standing in the Customs at Ventimiglia Station, "and at Genoa I will appropriately exclaim 'Christopher Columbus!'—and return by sea to England. I've had enough of travelling, and enough of trains; nor will the affairs of other people detain me for as much as the fraction of a minute; be they ever so grotesque and absorbing, I will not stop by the way!"

Thus man proposes . . .

"Yes, monsieur, I have much to declare"—this to the official behind the counter laden with trunks. "I have perfumes, laces, chocolate, cognac, cigarettes, gold coin, new silks, new socks, and three new hats!"

"*Il cavaliere* is joking," said the official politely. Without examining the battered old trunk and suit-case—for the Happy Meddler, who had forgotten frontier exigencies while lavishly buying up gifts for all his friends, was travelling for once as an ordinary mortal with ordinary luggage—he crossed them with white chalk, and motioned *il cavaliere* to pass through.

Carew shrugged his shoulders; he had done his duty; had been prepared to pay; it was not his fault that the Customs, appalled by such truthfulness, dismissed it as mere idle joking.

The train to Genoa was hot and stuffy, and all the windows were closed and vigilantly guarded by pallid Italians who had been warned by their doctors that fresh air would be fatal to them. After about two hours of torment Carew could bear no more. Just beyond the window was the sea—cool, clear green faintly shadowed with purple. He began to speculate on the rapture of diving into that sea and feeling it ripple round his fevered shoulders . . .

At Sant' Anna, which was the next stop, he alighted from the train, took a room for the night at the nearest hotel, and went out for his plunge. It was an exceptionally hot March, even for Italy, and the bathing

could be a dawdling affair which lasted throughout the afternoon. The Meddler was very contented and happy. Why should he have resolved to go straight through to Genoa in that business-like fashion? It was not natural for him, nor for any loafer alive, to go straight through to anywhere. He bathed again and again, until all bathes lapsed and melted into one long heavenly bathe.

Towards about six o'clock he reluctantly clothed himself in a pair of bags and an old sweater, and began to bargain with a native for the hire of his boat, lying tipsily embedded in the sand of the now almost deserted beach.

"Twenty-five lire for an hour, if that pleases *il cavaliere*," quoth the boatman, wildly gesticulating to testify to the reasonableness of his charges. Carew, not in the least unsettled by having been twice in one day dubbed a knight, dropped his counter suggestion of two lire an hour. They eventually met and agreed, as is right and proper, at twelve lire fifty centesimi. The boatman, with a gesture that signified that now nothing was left to him but suicide, walked away, and the Meddler, flinging off his sweater, prepared to launch the boat.

It was at this moment that he felt a tap on his shoulder.

Standing beside him was an elderly, upright, rather formal Englishman wearing a formal lounge suit. With one hand he nervously twisted his short military moustache, while with the other he clung on to a neat leather attaché case. "Please allow me to help you to drag down the boat," he said; "it's rather too much for one man, even a strong young man like yourself. And—er—would you have any objection, I wonder, as you are going for a row on this beautiful evening, to allow me to accompany you? And—er—this is confounded cheek from a perfect stranger!—could you drop me at Bellina in time for me to catch the six-twenty train? It's only

about two and a half kilometres along the coast towards Genoa. It is rather much to ask, but I should be extremely obliged."

Carew, while signifying his perfect willingness to drop the gentleman out of the boat at Bellina, was yet somewhat astonished. Did this special train not stop at Sant' Anna? If not, it was strange that it should make a halt at a much smaller place like Bellina. The stranger grew yet more confused at the inquiry, and after a preliminary cough and clearing of the throat, he explained, one hand on the stern of the boat, now rocking slightly on a sea that was stained with pools and puddles the hue of Burgundy from the sunset glow behind the hills: "Before embarking, it's only right to let you know that, as an honest fact, I—er—don't wish to be seen leaving Sant' Anna. So that everything may be straightforward between us, I had better tell you that I am, in a measure, running away from home. Nothing criminal, I give you my word as an Englishman," he added hurriedly. "I can tell you all about it while you row; and if you don't approve—well, you can just take me back again and land me once more at Sant' Anna. The matter is urgent, and if I stop to explain now——"

Carew smiled and motioned the stranger to enter the boat. The hero of this encounter was so absolutely all that is correct and desirable in a retired military man spending the winter on the Riviera with his family, that the words "running away from home," uttered by him, became entirely preposterous. Carew liked the preposterous, which was, he declared, all that redeemed life from being quite too preposterously logical. He hoped that the gentleman was carrying the body, cut up very small, in the attaché case. Or did it merely contain the duchess's emeralds? That case looked too small for a body, but too large for emeralds!

He rowed in a leisurely fashion towards Bellina, and waited with a great deal of curiosity for his bed-time story to begin. "Pleasant bathing, here at Sant' Anna," said the Meddler at last, encouragingly. "The sea is like—like liquid emeralds!"

More clearing of the throat. "Ah, yes, pleasant enough. I live here a good part of the year with my family. That is our villa, that one up there, with the bougainvillea over the balcony. Very pleasant indeed. I *think*, if you lean a little to the right, you will see Barbara, my daughter. No, it's my wife, look," said the fugitive

wistfully, "with the red parasol, coming out into the garden."

The Meddler reflected that for an escaping criminal his passenger had a good deal to learn with regard to covering his identity from stray helpers.

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Lownes, Brigadier-General Lownes, retired from the 27th Punjabis. You see, Mr. —"—Carew supplied the vacancy—"you see, Mr. Carew, to-morrow is the last day of our tennis tournament at the Sant' Anna English Sports Club." And he ceased his explanation, as though by this statement Carew could divine the rest.

"Rather exciting, isn't it? Don't you want to be there for it? Do you play?"

"Oh, I am a very inferior player, very inferior indeed; but the point is that I am the only really sound and reliable umpire among the members this year. Umpiring is not *quite* so easy as it sounds. There is really no one but myself who can be put on to umpire the match of the day, the Finals of the Men's Open Singles."

"And you are going to catch the sixty-two at Bellina?"

"I hope so," said the General. "Indeed I hope so." And he looked meaningly at the oars, which Carew had allowed to rest in their rowlocks.

"Yes, but if I go on rowing, who's to umpire that match to-morrow?" Thus Carew sought to awaken the conscience of the lost leader. "Just for a handful of silver he left ' them," he murmured; "just for a riband to put in his coat . . ."

"I don't care *who* umpires it!" cried Brigadier-General Lownes with sudden passion. "I don't care *who* umpires it!" And his tongue was unloosed and his throat was free from obstructive matter, and he at last proceeded to enlighten his hearer as to the reason of his strange flight.

It appeared that the finals were between a certain middle-aged Penomian named Maurice Pablowitz and a young Italian named Corona. The Penomian was a pot-hunter of the kind so often met with in tournaments on the Riviera. He played entirely for the prizes' sake and apparently did not care a hang for the game itself. He never carelessly gave away a single point; he grumbled ceaselessly at the lack of organisation; he contested every decision given against him; he had offended all the other members of the tennis club with his tiresome behaviour and bullying methods.

Dislike of the Penomian player must, indeed, have swelled to an intensity beyond all reason, to judge by the General's accents when pronouncing his name. But one thing he admitted to be undoubtedly true—that the pot-hunter could play tennis, a steadfast, experienced game allied to excellent technique. His young opponent, Corona, though a fast and brilliant performer, with a style that left Pablowitz sitting well behind among the second-class players, could also, when the mood deserted him, play like the veriest rabbit. The General confessed to a premonition that on the morrow Corona, a distinct favourite in the club, feeling his responsibility, would perversely not be in top form; and for him there was no middle form.

"He's only a youngster still, you see; no discipline, no reliability. But he's a charming lad, a thoroughly decent lad, Italian father, English mother, with the best of both nations in his blood. I've had opportunity for judging; he is a guest in our villa during the tournament. My family, you see, are all tennis enthusiasts. Bobby and his partner stand a good chance of winning the mixed handicap doubles. They are all absurdly fond of young Corona, and, of course, crazy for him to win. Well, naturally, they don't want Pablowitz to win. I give you my word, sir, that if you had seen Pablowitz's behaviour during this tournament, you would have felt the—the utter impossibility of umpiring these finals, and having to sit up there and declare Pablowitz the winner. I can't do it, Mr. Carew! It's more than I can bear. And something tells me that Pablowitz *will* win. I don't see why I should expose myself to a painful hour like that. They can't expect me to umpire from Rapallo, can they? Three or four days at Rapallo, and I shall come back a new man; my nerves are in bits."

Carew had listened sympathetically. He had had experience of these sudden exaggerated animosities that could spring up through a whole club against one individual; these states of nervous tension which seem ridiculous and abnormal to the outsider, but in a way represent in miniature the world's quarrels. Nevertheless, he felt that the General, swayed by the atmosphere at home and the atmosphere at the club, had lost all sense of proportion. Flight to escape from his umpiring duties the next day was surely too drastic an action.

"Look here," argued the Happy

Meddler, now thoroughly in his element, "you can't run away, you know. What about a relaxed throat? Nobody could expect you to umpire with a relaxed throat. You could sit there with a muffler on and comfortably watch the match."

The General objected. He said the weather was too hot to wear a muffler all day, especially with his feelings at boiling-point. He insisted that he was better right out of the way, and that he must catch the six-twenty at Bellina, and that nothing would induce him to return. . . .

"But you said that there was no decent umpire to take your place," Carew reminded him sternly. "You can't possibly leave your club in the lurch like this." For now before the Happy Meddler's eyes danced a truly enchanting opportunity for his unique powers of interference and adjustment: The finals of a tennis tournament, well beaten up with human psychology, nervous friction, and an escaping General! The ingredients could not be bettered. "I have a proposal to make to you, sir. I have myself acted as tennis umpire a good many times; my voice is strong. Listen!" And, fairly letting himself go, Carew shouted across the startled Mediterranean: "Forty-fifteen! And I understand the game perfectly," he continued, when the echoes had melted again into the twilight stillness. "But I can't walk in as a perfect stranger and offer my services. If you take me down there to-morrow morning, and in a hoarse whisper introduce me as a possible substitute for you—I've often umpired for the Bullivant Club, and at Roxbourne—I can practise on minor events during the morning. What time did you say the Men's Finals were to be played? Three o'clock? Well, there you are! They will have recognised my genius by then, and all you need do is to cultivate that hoarse whisper, and whimper for black-currant jelly."

General Lownes allowed himself to be persuaded, and Carew rowed him back to Sant' Anna, and accepted his hearty invitation to dine at his villa that night. "Don't change; come just as you are, and I can say that you are an old friend, and that I have been with you on the water. And that," said the General, as triumphantly as though it had been his idea from the start, "and *that* will account for my relaxed throat! 'Pon my word, I am beginning to feel that it's relaxed already; the evenings here are cold, you know."

Twenty minutes later saw them at Villa Cecilia; and Carew, minutely inspecting the chief personalities in to-morrow's drama, decided that they were even more engaging than he had foreseen. Barbara Lownes, aged eighteen, and Stefano Corona, only two years older, represented an idyll that haunted his imagination with the love-stories of ancient Greece, where the graceful young athlete, laurel-wreathed, leaps forward to lay his trophies at the slim, sandalled feet of the maiden who, with clasped hands and eyes soft with hope, has been looking on at his prowess. Corona was a charming youth, lean and nervous as a young race-horse, with a small, beautifully-shaped head, and manners that revealed, in a way that was funny and yet delightful to the beholder, his pride in behaving like a "true sport."

They were all deep in discussion of to-morrow's contest, Mrs. Lownes as eager and excited as any of her children. Bobby and his younger brother Reggie were furious in their denunciations of the crimes of "that tick, Pablowitz," whom Corona generously defended, while, half to tease his worshipper, Reggie, and half in wry earnest, he prophesied his own slashing defeat. No other subject was possible for discussion on the very eve of battle; and Carew was readily admitted into the circle, his interest taken for granted. He learnt that Corona hoped to compete in the championship at Wimbledon in a couple of years; already he was down as number six on the Italian list for the Davis Cup. "If only his play weren't sometimes so utterly wild!" groaned Bobby Lownes. "When you're off your form, you know, Corona, you hit 'em half-way to Genoa; and the worse you get, the more bucked he'll be!"

"Edith," interrupted the General, at this juncture claiming his wife's attention, "I don't believe, y'know, that I'll be able to umpire to-morrow; my throat, it—er—it—it feels *relaxed*!"

"Oh, *father*!"—in a concerted wail from Mrs. Lownes, Barbara, Bobby and Reggie. And at once the General was ignominiously hustled away to bed, with remedies, inhalations, gargles, and a thick stocking to tie round the delicate and suffering organ. The last look which he flung at Carew, before departing, was as eloquent as Lord Burleigh's famous nod.

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So it fell to Corona to see the Meddler home to his hotel, and Barbara walked

with them to the garden gate. The young couple, bidding each other a lingering "Good night," must have thought, in the moonless darkness, that their guest had walked on further than in reality he had; for he distinctly overheard Barbara whisper: "*If you pull it off to-morrow—then, yes, I will!*"

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Carew had had no doubt but that, in contrast to the General, his attitude at the tennis tournament the next day would be that of a level-minded, well-nigh celestial being, coolly poised, without prejudice or preference. He had entered the Club as an impartial stranger, and yet, before he had been watching the tennis for half an hour, he found himself most surprisingly infected by exactly the same frantic dislike of Maurice Pablowitz, the same fiery wish that the older man should be beaten by Corona, as if he had been mixed up in Sant' Anna Tennis Club politics for years. For nobody could gainsay that, with his thick iron-grey hair and handsome, rather theatrical face, Pablowitz had a decidedly objectionable personality. He *did* contest decisions in a disagreeable, rasping voice that displayed his complete faith in his own judgment and a complete disregard for the opinions of others; and he *did* play to win—prizes. His eye was on the prize all the time. Mechanically he would gather in his haul and pass on to the next tournament on that coast. Rumour spread it about that he had already won everything that was worth while at Cremona and Terriniamo before coming to Sant' Anna.

Despicable qualities usually arouse in others their least fine and fastidious selves, so it is not surprising that players, onlookers, and umpires alike, down to the very ball-boys, during these final matches at Sant' Anna, were not behaving very chivalrously towards Maurice Pablowitz. The onlookers especially applauded his opponents' well-delivered shots in the Final Mixed Doubles and the Men's Doubles, played that morning, with almost hysterical frenzy, but remained conspicuously depressed when Pablowitz brought off a difficult shot with credit. The Lownes family were flagrant in this respect; and the General himself was probably restrained from the same behaviour only by his years of discipline in the Army, and by having to remember that he could not speak above a hoarse whisper, his throat having proved very much worse this

morning, so that, to his deep regret—as he muttered apologetically to the referee of the tournament, Major Shuter—he was unable to umpire at all. He introduced Carew, therefore, as well able, if required, to act in his stead, mentioning, as guarantee of his ability, for what club and matches he had already umpired in the past: “You remember, don’t you, Shuter, when G. N. Cray played that South American fellow at Roxbourne?” As the Club was really short of talent in this respect, Carew was put on to take a couple of handicap events. Fully satisfied as to his powers, they asked him to umpire for the Mixed Finals. This was the Happy Meddler’s first chance closely to watch the Penomian’s play. To his complete amazement, he noticed that the foot-fault rule was being absolutely ignored. That Pablowitz should be a flagrant offender against this rule was a distinct surprise. At once, and with reprehensible pleasure, he realised that this negligence on the Penomian’s part might well lose him that afternoon’s great match. He would have to be warned, of course, before the match started. But foot-faulting is a habit that, once carelessly contracted, is difficult suddenly to overcome. Corona, on the other hand, sent his serves from so far behind the base-line that there was no fear that the newly-imposed observance of the strict L.T.A. rule would disconcert him.

Carew realised, furthermore, that as umpire he would have no power to enforce the foot-fault rule; that was the business of the base linesman. One of the base linesmen, therefore, he would have to be; perhaps Bobby Lownes might be the other, after some coaching from Carew to be sharp on any violation of the rule. A very happy Meddler went to Major Shuter, after his present protracted umpireship had terminated with a victory, of course, to Pablowitz’s side.

With a sunny smile, he said: “I am afraid I shan’t be ready to umpire a long match until about four o’clock, sir. This last one has fairly worn out my voice. If you could possibly find somebody else, I’m quite willing to take a line, of course. Oh, and by the way,” he added, “you haven’t been very down on foot-faulting during this tournament, have you? I’ve seen it several times, but I just wondered whether you were being lenient about it, for any reason. This isn’t Wimbledon, of course, but——”

He had touched Major Shuter on a susceptible point. Sant’ Anna was not Wimbledon, but there was no reason why a Sant’ Anna tournament should not be run with all the severities and formalities of Wimbledon. His referee’s pride drew itself to its full height, while he informed Mr. Carew that he would see to it that from this moment onward the foot-fault rule should be enforced, and that umpires in ensuing matches were to warn the players, before starting, that they might take due note.

“I ought to have been a politician!” Carew told himself, cheerfully accepting Major Shuter’s invitation to lunch.

\* \* \* \* \*

It seemed to be Carew’s fate that, like one of those invisible deities who used to preside over Homeric battles and show favouritism to either Greek or Trojan, he was always somewhere unperceived in the vicinity of Corona and Barbara in their snatched moments of tenderness. Thus, at three p.m., just before the imposing procession of umpire, players, linesmen, and ball-boys trooped on to the centre court, he once again saw, though he could not hear what was said, how the boy and the girl clasped hands for a fleeting instant, while gaily Corona flung back his head and promised something. And what could his promise be but the same as last night, since on winning depended her favour?

Carew sat down to watch his line with a thrill at the knowledge of what hung on this momentous match. He thrived on drama as others thrive on oxygen, provided always that he need not play too subordinate a part in whatever was afoot. The rôle of benevolent deity of Young Romance just suited him, especially when, on the other side, smouldered an intense, angry will-to-win that had obviously become an obsession with Maurice Pablowitz. The man was a pot-hunter of the very worst type. If this were the sort of spirit that the Penomian player had carried through life for nearly fifty-one years, it was time he was taught. Carew did not wonder at all now that the General, fearing the besetting temptation towards bias, had tried to run away from umpiring duties, even to the length of the six-twenty at Bellina. Well, the stage was set. “We shall see!” hissed the Meddler’s secret self in the wings.



Five minutes later he realised, appalled, that young Corona was playing what was in all probability the worst game of his life. Soft and precise his game never was. He rarely lobbed, and he avoided giving soft returns; but that low shoulder-drive of his that just whizzed over the net, the most brilliant stroke in his repertoire, practically impossible for his opponent to return—what had happened to it? He was using it—yes, to excess—and sending the ball out every time. But Pablowitz, too,

was severely handicapped. Confident, up till now, that foot-faulting was not being enforced in this little amateur tournament, he was fiercely angry at finding himself losing point after point over a bad habit which once he had successfully



“‘Fault!’ cried that cheerful but inexorable voice.”

managed to remedy, but had lately allowed to lapse past sudden recovery. If this had happened to him yesterday, he might by now have his foot strictly in hand again, so to speak.

The Penomian's expression grew more and more disagreeable, especially when his

minutes, and then would start smashing the balls out again.

And thus they reached the final set of the match, which stood at two sets all.

The atmosphere was tense; there was very little applauding now; the rows and rows of watchers from the terrace, intent on every stroke, had reached that zenith of silence which always precedes a sudden snap of the strain. No sound was heard except the calling of the score in a loud monotone, an occasional interpolation from one of the linesmen, the twang of the ball on the racket, the thud of the ball on the ground, and the scurry of the ball-boys' feet. . . . This struggle was no mere tennis; by haphazard it had reached a significance



"He was fiercely angry at finding himself losing point after point."

service came round. "Fault!" cried that cheerful but inexorable voice from behind him, and "Fault!" again. . . . But, thank goodness, that young panther on the other side of the net was not profiting much by his foot-faults. Corona played magnificently but hectically for a few

on the verge of symbolism. Where would the trophy go? Fifty-one's technique matched against Twenty's strength. Young

Popularity in conflict with the Villain of the Piece. Greed playing a game with the eternal lover.

Five-four in Corona's favour in the last set, and the game had reached vantage striker, with Pablowitz serving. The next point might very well end the match; yet if, on the contrary, Corona should lose it, it seemed unlikely, to the Meddler's penetrating instinct, that he would ever recover ground again. It was sheer luck, considering his utterly wild and unreliable state, that the score should stand even for a moment with its present advantage to him. Pablowitz played as dogged a losing as a winning game. Not again would he allow his opponent within one point of victory. If Corona dropped from vantage striker to deuce, then next the Meddler's foreboding heard the score shouted: "Vantage server!" and then "Game to Pablowitz! The score is five-all in the last set." And from five-all, to six-five, and then. . . . He could imagine the desperate way in which pretty Barbara would set her lips and clench her hands to show no outward disappointment at hearing the fatal: "Game, set, match to Pablowitz!" . . .

("If you pull it off to-morrow. . . .")

Pablowitz's first serve went into the net. "Fault!" cried the umpire.

And "*Fault!*" shouted the base linesman, sharply watching the second serve.

The umpire declared: "Game, set, match to Corona!"

And the long-pent-up applause surged from the terraces over the courts.

The contest was over, and the boy had won. No need, after all, for Barbara to repress her tears so bravely. Carew, still in the character of the benevolent deity of Young Romance, glanced expectantly across at the victor. But instead of joyfully and with radiant face bursting his way through a mob of congratulating friends towards Barbara, Corona looked glum and downcast; and, after shaking hands with Pablowitz and thanking the umpire, he hurriedly left the court and went straight upstairs to the dressing-rooms.

Queer! . . . And he was not there, either, for the presentation of prizes; he left a message asking Bobby Lownes to take his for him.

This was felt by everyone present to be an anti-climax. Corona had been such a favourite, his wonted high spirits so contagious, his popularity had left him so unspoilt, that his slightly ungracious

behaviour now was a blow. And the subsequent moment when Maurice Pablowitz, tight-lipped and scowling, came up to carry away his prize as runner-up in the Men's Singles, proved distinctly uncomfortable.

"Good Heavens," reflected Carew irritably, "a fellow at that age has no right to care so much about a rotten prize or two!"

At the General's invitation he again returned to the Villa Cecilia for dinner.

And if the Happy Meddler had hoped to enjoy the spectacle of two young lovers whose idyll he had aided towards glamorous fulfilment, he was to be bitterly disappointed. They were both alike silent and disconsolate. Barbara steadily did not glance towards Stefano, though his pleading looks must almost have pierced the droop of her eyelids. It was plain that they had quarrelled, and that it was she who was reproachful, he suing for pardon, yet at the same time conscious of no deep guilt. Carew felt inclined to be wrathful with Barbara. Why, when the conqueror brought along the trophy and laid it at her feet, claiming her promise, why could she not be more deliciously rewarding? She did not know the first rules of the golden game as played by maid and athlete, nymph and shepherd, boy and girl, ever since the world began.

Their perplexing behaviour showed up all the more clearly in contrast with the hilarity of the rest of the Lownes family. The General, on whom all day had sat heavily his self-imposed silence, was now chafing to remain an invalid no longer. His wife and Bobby and Reggie were all talking at once, loudly discussing every episode of the day's play, exulting in Pablowitz's discomfiture, prophesying great victories to Corona's future. To the General was brought a glass of some sweet and cloying mixture which the cook had sent up, at Mrs. Lownes' request, to soothe the inflammation of his throat. The General refused it; he refused it thrice, like Julius Cæsar when presented with a kingly crown upon the Lupercal. Mrs. Lownes insisted. The General, forgetting himself, began to bellow; his bellow was magnificent; he stood revealed as no invalid, but a hypocrite and shirker. Reggie told him so. Reggie was ordered off to bed. Reggie would not go. The General, not to be muffled any longer, bellowed at practically everyone in the room. It was a lively meal—except for Stefano and Barbara, who had

quarrelled, and sat silent and disconsolate.

Carew could bear it no longer. After dinner, on some pretext or other, he led Corona to a solitary corner of the terrace.

"She is like a white pansy and a nymph of spring"—to the Italian side of Corona. And "Look here, old chap, I can't get the hang of this. What's up?"—to the English side.

The boy drew a long breath, and then, as naturally as water cascading in eloquence over a cliff's drop, he poured out his tale.

Yes, they had quarrelled. Barbara was angry with him. But was she not sweet and lovely as ever girl had been in either Corona's life or any other man's? And, in a way, it *was* his fault. His vanity, his sense of sheer fun and skilful accomplishment, had allowed him to swing himself too perilously near to victory in the great match with Pablowitz. He had meant to lose it; he had promised Barbara he would lose it.

"Lose it?" repeated the Meddler, puzzled. "You mean, win it?"

"No, no, no—no, no, no! Lose it. You see," explained Corona, astride of the low balustrade, "I didn't want to look too much of a donkey. To lose it, yes; but just, only just! You remember we were two sets all and five-four in the last. Of course, if Pablowitz had been playing as well as usual, I should not have had to play so badly, you understand, yes? How disgraceful were my drives! Fortunately, that is nothing new for me, but it happened that this afternoon I could have played the game of my lifetime! I could have taken three sets off him, one after the other, easily! You know that feeling, you? It is queer, you know, when nothing can go wrong, and you yield to it. Yet just to-day I might not yield to it! But I will go as close as *that*, as *that*, to the edge, I tell myself, just for the fun of it; I enjoy fun!" For a moment the boy's bright, slanting eyes showed a faun-like glint. "Pablowitz was not at his best. The sudden introduction of the foot-fault rule upset him, irritated him. But even then, never, never, *never* does he send a double fault in his service. He is known for it—oh, he is reliable, and his technique! So there we were, thirty-forty; and I tell myself: his serve, I will send it back into the net hard, and it will be deuce, and next it will be his game and five-all. And after that, easy, he wins two more games and the match!"

The flow of Stefano's eager speech was suddenly choked. "How could I know?" he murmured despairingly. "You remember? He sent a double, one into the net—yes, that might happen—and then that confounded foot-fault. And it was a beautiful serve, that second one; it is not likely that I should have scored off it. But Barbara reproaches me; she says that I forget my promise when my vanity as a tennis player makes me forget; that once playing, I cannot bear to let myself lose. Barbara thinks that of me! She thinks I am so petty"—he made a superb gesture of defiance—"so young as that!"

"All this is as Arabic to me," said Carew. "Why should you desire that unpopular and highly disagreeable man to beat you? And, above all things, why should Barbara desire it? I may be a simple fool, but if I were a girl and cared for a man"—Corona flushed hotly—"I should like to see him victorious. What's behind all this?"

"He is a very disagreeable man, that Maurice Pablowitz," Corona assented, "but, then, you don't know. . . . And down at the Club they don't know, either. They call him a pot-hunter. I, too, don't like him much; I don't think him a tr-r-rue sportsman. Then one day, by accident, from a man who has known him much longer than any of us, I hear the truth. Perhaps it is that one cannot be unhappy and agreeable at the same time. For he is in love, Mr. Carew, and most unhappy. He plays for the prizes and not for the game, that is true; but it is to take them all home to *her*, so that she can change them at the shops for the pretty things she wants. She is kind to him for a little while, after he has won for her a great many pretty things. She is greedy, she has no soul, but she is very, very beautiful, a *belle dame sans merci*. Sometimes," quoth young Stefano Corona meditatively, "middle-age does not save a man from being a fool in love."

Carew thought profoundly for a few seconds. Then he asked: "Who is the enchantress?"

And Corona, who was only twenty, and really a charming boy, replied simply: "But, of course, his wife!"

"Yes, they have a villa here," he went on to answer the questions that Carew was eagerly asking, in postponement of an awkward moment. "She does not go out much. She was not at the Club during the

tournament; she is not interested. I have seen her once. *Per Bacco*, but she is beautiful! Not young any more, perhaps thirty-five, but beautiful; no great wonder that he is infatuated. And one saw that she cared for nothing but the things that were hard and beautiful and glowing like herself—ivory and tortoiseshell, lapis-lazuli, and agate. She lies there—can you see her?—on a couch, and she plays with those pretty toys that he has won for her, and then she gets tired of them, and forgets to be kind to him again until he brings her something else. He is not rich—oh, not at all rich! He is retired from business, and their income is only what one calls ‘adequate,’ which is another word for dull. This is the one way, then, by which he can supply her with what she craves—by his tennis playing! He goes up and down the Riviera coast, for at these clubs the prizes are usually costly. And that, Signor Carew, is why they call Maurice Pablowitz the Pot-Hunter!”

“And Barbara—she knew?”

“I told her. She is, this Barbara of mine, a very chivalrous boy, when she is not a girl and a princess and a darling. She cried out to me: ‘Oh, but he *must* win it, then!’ For it was the best prize of all, this Men’s Singles Championship—the value was a thousand lire. ‘He *must* win! You will let him, won’t you, Stefano? Just in case he doesn’t beat you, anyhow, you will let him? It must be so hard for him!’ So I promised her, because what does it matter to me? It is only a game, after all, to me. It was to him that it meant so much more than a game; and Barbara, she said: ‘We are very young, Stefano, and you will win in dozens of tournaments.’ Which I shall,” quoth the Hope of young Italy, confidently. “So I promised her, and by accident I break my promise, and she is angry with me; and, indeed, it is all over.”

He pulled out of his pocket a small but beautifully wrought cigarette case in solid gold, the prize in the Men’s Open Singles. “And this is all I have left,” quoth he, scornful of mere treasure.

Carew was up against his ugly moment now, and there was no escape for him. “Have you ever heard a certain quotation, Corona, ‘the wish is father to the thought’?”

The boy nodded listlessly: “But yes.”

“It is excellent psychology, that quotation—the wish is father to the thought,

the thought is father to the act. . . . I wanted *you* to win that match—do you know why?”

“I suppose, like everyone else,” suggested Corona, “that you did not like Pablowitz.”

Much as Carew objected to being classed in the category “like everyone else,” it had indeed happened that for once he had been no more clear-sighted nor individual in his preferences. He *had* disliked Pablowitz. And then that moment at the gate—“If you pull it off to-morrow—yes, I will!” and, again like everyone else, he had given the words an obvious interpretation. Richard Spurnville Carew had been entirely dense and entirely conventional. He was, moreover, a guilty man come to confession.

“I was taking the base-line,” he said abruptly, “when Pablowitz was serving in that last point of the last game. His first ball went into the net. In his second serve he did *not* break the foot-fault rule. I gave it as a foot-fault, but actually his foot remained well behind the line.”

Corona sprang from the balustrade on to the terrace; his face was suddenly radiant. A miracle had occurred. He did not wait for detailed explanations. “Barbara!” he called out, rushed past the Meddler and bounded into the house, calling: “Barbara! Barbara!”

A moment later the two appeared at the end of the terrace.

“Tell her!” commanded Corona breathlessly.

Carew told her.

The boy and the girl did not, in his presence, fall into each other’s arms with incoherent pardons and forgiveness; they merely looked at each other—once; they had very good manners, this boy and girl. Then Barbara, more curious than her lover, and also more direct, asked, wide-eyed: “Did you really cheat on purpose, because you wanted Stefano to win?”

“No,” replied Carew, a weary penitent before these grave young accusers, and wincing slightly at the word “cheat.” “It wasn’t exactly like that. I knew that might be the deciding point, and I wanted Corona to win it, rather more ardently than is compatible with my sober years and character. Pablowitz had been foot-faulting a lot, and I had been looking for his foot-faults. Strung up to expectation, I had a sort of hallucination just before he served. . . . I projected myself half

a second ahead of time, and saw his foot swing over the line. . . . But it did not do so, and I had shouted 'Foot fault!' half a second too soon." A pause, and then : "What I *could* have done," the Happy Meddler continued, with an effort, "was to own up immediately that I had given a wrong decision. But then, you see, I did not like Pablowitz—I've mentioned that before—and he would have been so intolerably, so sneeringly triumphant, that I couldn't bear to reverse my verdict, especially as the umpire had already shouted 'Game, set, match.' For I imagined, Barbara, that your heart had leapt into your throat with joy."

Barbara said, looking at Corona : "Yes, he could not be expected to have understood."

And Corona said, looking at Barbara : "He could not be expected to have understood more than that."

So they relegated him to a background where people dwelt of no very fine perceptions, these two imaginative youngsters

who had seen further through a thicket than he. . . .

"And now what's to be done?" asked Barbara, who was the daughter of a man of action. "The match can't be played again."

Corona lightly tossed the cigarette case into the air and caught it in his other hand ; it might have been his heart that he was tossing so lightly. "It is simple, what is to be done. Someone ought to take this round to Pablowitz and explain the mistake and what has happened. If he has any scruples in accepting it, we can easily arrange to play out the set from the point we reached to-day—and then you would see, my Barbara, how I should lose! But I think he will not refuse it. He will be glad of it for his wife. And it is rightfully his."

"Someone ought to take it round at once," echoed Barbara.

And Someone, leaving Young Love at the end of the dim terrace, obediently went at once, with the cigarette case in his pocket.

*A further episode from the career of "The Happy Meddler" will appear in the next number.*



## HAVEN.

**H**ERE comes she home, with God's wide peace about her ;  
Gently the slow tide rocks her sleepy prow.  
The scarlet sparks that flickered fading waters  
Die on the sun's forge now.

Here lie her moorings, looms at last a haven ;  
Topples her mainsail : riding-lights glow deep.  
Let her forget awhile Atlantic tumults  
And fold herself for sleep.

So would I come with God's wide peace about me,  
Through storm and splendour, triumph and dismay,  
Back to the childhood's haven whence I voyaged,  
And dream the hours away.

GEOFFREY FYSON.

# THE LADY OF THE WATER-COLOURS

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. WILMSHURST

"SO that's settled, then," said Gabrielle. "You're dining with us on Thursday?"

She tapped the little gloved index finger of her left hand with the little gloved index finger of her right, as if she were ticking off the items of an account. Young Sir John Brimpton inclined his head.

"Thursday," he said, "as ever is."

"And you won't dress? Because father's got a vestry meeting, and mother's hard at work finishing 'The Romance of a District Visitor.'"

Here she tapped the end of her middle finger and looked at him inquiringly.

"All right. I shall wear a few clothes, of course, but you'll hardly notice them."

"And you'll be there punctually at a quarter to eight?"

"I'll mark it down as zero."

"And bring Nolly with you?"

"By the ear, if necessary. But I don't think he's likely to struggle much. There are times when I have to concentrate all my thoughts on Nolly's freckles to avoid being jealous of him."

The girl laughed outright. "Don't be an idiot, Bunk," she said. "See you and Nolly on Thursday, then. And now, as Tapton Admiral is a bachelor establishment, and half the village is probably timing me with a stop-watch to see how long it takes me to deliver a message here, I suppose I had better go. Give my love to Nolly."

Bunk shook his head. "I shall give him your kind regards," he said. "The boy is swollen-headed enough already. Besides, he thinks he has discovered a new kind of beetle. Unless you handle him with discretion, he will certainly name it after you."

They were standing on a broad path behind the long Elizabethan house. The house faced south, and threw a shadow over

them and beyond the edge of a great lawn on which a hydrant was at play. The month was May, and the flower beds were ablaze with a hundred fires of spring. From these vivid hues, intensified by sunlight, the eye turned gratefully to the cool green of the lawn and on to the high yew hedge in the middle distance. Beyond was the dark mass of a pine wood, whose serried spears pricked the vivid blue curtain of the sky. Gabrielle, disappointed of a London season, and with her thoughts divided between Bunk and Nolly and the fair pleasance spread out before her, admitted to herself that there were worse places in May than Tapton Admiral.

As they stood silent for a moment, a door opened and Rutherford, the butler, appeared. He was a young man with an air of alertness and an athletic carriage which were alike contrary to the traditions of his calling.

"A lady to see you, sir," he announced.

Bunk looked puzzled. "A lady?" he repeated. "Who is it?"

"I don't know, sir. She didn't give me her name. She asked if you were in, and I said I'd go and see."

"Oh, well, I suppose I am. You don't know what she wants, Rutherford?"

"I think the young lady has something to sell, sir."

Bunk inclined his head. It was not lost upon him that Rutherford had described the visitor as a young lady, although she had something to sell.

"Oh, tell her I'll see her if she'll wait a little while," he said.

Gabrielle shot him a mischievous smile as soon as Rutherford was gone.

"This savours of the romantic," she said.

"I hope, for your sake, she's nice-looking."

"Then she'll be an improvement on the last one," said Bunk.

"The last one!" exclaimed Gabrielle severely.

"Day before yesterday. That one wished an encyclopædia on to me, and it's coming up from the station this morning. Imagine me enriching my mind out of an encyclopædia! Poor creatures! Some people, I know, turn 'em down without seeing them, but I haven't got the heart. It must be a rotten life, touting things from door to door, and putting up with the cheek of servants and the rudeness of people who don't know what it feels like to be hard up."

"You've a big heart," said Gabrielle, more than half seriously.

"Slightly enlarged, the doctor tells me. Well, if you really must go, I suppose I'd better see about another encyclopædia, or some undrinkable tea, or whatever it is I'm required to buy. And I'll lay you three pairs of gloves to one she isn't pretty. They never are, poor dears. You'll be able to see for yourself as you go through the hall."

Gabrielle shook her head. "No, I'm not coming through, thank you. I'll go round. I left my bicycle in the front. No, don't come with me. Good-bye, Bunk, and be good. See you on Thursday, if not before."

Bunk settled his crutch under his arm—for his left leg hung limp and useless, a memento of the Great War—and prepared to accompany her to the front of the house. But she waved him back, laughing, and doubled her pace, so that he gave up the hopeless pursuit and turned away.

Bunk, moving with considerable agility despite his disability, entered the house through a long window of the gunroom which reached to the ground, and passed on into the hall through a narrow wooden passage which gave most people, on going through it, a momentary impression of being on board a ship. The hall was high and square and stately, but ill-lit, the only windows being high above the turn of the stairs. Even by day one needed artificial light to see the Tudor roses on the carved oak ceiling, or examine the arms of an extinct family above one of the fireplaces. A girl who had been sitting on a great Dutch chair rose hastily as he came swinging into her presence, transferring from her lap to beneath her arm a great flat parcel which looked like a portfolio hidden under a covering of brown paper. Bunk confronted her with a smile, a slight bow, and an inquiring gaze.

"I—I wished to see Sir John Brimpton," she said nervously.

He bowed again. The girl regarded him with a faint air of bewilderment.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "I thought——"

She left the sentence unfinished, but Bunk understood and helped her out.

"Perhaps," he said, "you expected to see my late uncle. My name is the same as his. He died nearly a year ago."

The girl inclined her head.

"Did you know him?" Bunk asked.

"No." Her voice sounded suddenly weary. "No, I did not know him. But my mother did."

Bunk regarded her closely but unobtrusively. He had come into the darkened hall blinking from the dazzle of the garden outside. Now, as his eyes grew used to the dimness, he could see that his visitor was very young—perhaps less than twenty—and that she was beautiful, or very nearly beautiful, after a melancholy, almost tragic fashion which might have inspired the brush of Rossetti or Burne-Jones. She looked tired, worn out. Her head drooped like a parched flower on its stem. Her clothes were neat enough, but shabby; her brown leather shoes were powdered with the dust of the roads. But her voice and manner alike proclaimed her for what she was. Rutherford had made no mistake when he called her a lady.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" Bunk asked.

For a moment she looked him straight in the face, half defiantly, lifting her head to say what she found hard to say.

"I am trying to sell some water-colour sketches." Then she lowered her gaze and tone together. "But I don't suppose you would care about them," she added.

"I don't know why you should think that," said Bunk, smiling. "Are they your own work?"

"Yes."

"Then I'd like to see them. Let's take them in here, shall we? The light is better."

He took the brown paper parcel from her hands and led the way to the door of a morning-room, into which he presently followed her. A minute later the contents of the portfolio were spread out upon a round table.

Bunk was no art critic, but the little water-colour landscapes could scarcely have deceived a child. Beginner's work it was, and not great at that. She had



learned a technical trick or two—there were no obvious crudities of line or form—but subjects and treatment alike were of a hackneyed pretty-pretty, and there was no attempt at impressionism. A field of ripe grain with a path straggling through it, backed by a coppice, with a church spire in the distance; a stone bridge over a stream, pollard willows along one bank, and a moored punt in the foreground; a field of poppies and a flamboyant sunset—such work as one sees in picture shops, priced at seven-and-sixpence or even less.

Bunk, good soul, recognised their type, but regarded them optimistically, even with apparent admiration. You must picture him tall and rather lean, with a long straight nose and steadfast grey eyes which looked serious until he smiled, a thin-lipped humorous mouth and small square chin—a lame Galahad with a sense of humour. He was not so used to the possession of money as to be unable to pity his poorer brethren. He had known poverty, if not abject poverty—flat life with one servant in a dingy Bayswater house. His father was a naval officer who supported on his pay two sons and an invalid wife. In those days four lives had stood between Bunk and the baronetcy, and the War had taken three of them. He had gone to one of the lesser public schools, and thence to Cambridge on a scholarship, where he had lived the straitened, humiliating life of an undergraduate with inadequate means. Only too well he knew the meaning of light purses and heavy hearts.

Now his thoughts were concentrated on the girl rather than on the water-colours. She looked so tired, so very nearly hopeless. He must help her, of course, but he must be careful not to let her suspect that pity prompted him. She was not the sort of girl to accept charity—that greatest of all gifts, whose other name is love, and is yet anathema to the proud in spirit.

"I like that," said Bunk, putting one of the sketches aside. "That's jolly," he continued, laying another on top of it. "You artists are a mystery to me. I can't think how you do it. But I suppose any kind of direct gift is always inexplicable to the people who don't possess it."

She smiled wanly.

"How much are these?" he asked.

"Half a guinea each."

Bunk was not so tactless as to embarrass her by offering more than her own price.

"I'll take these six, then," he said.

"They seem to be very reasonable, if I may say so."

"Some people don't think so."

"Really? What on earth do they expect for their money?"

"They're just pot-boilers," said the girl. "I—I ought to tell you that, as you don't seem to know much about—about painting. They're not worth half a guinea."

She had begun to breathe with difficulty, and Bunk, fearful of a breakdown, kept his hand on the selected sketches.

"They are to me," he said. "Like every other Philistine, I only know what I like. I'd sooner live with these than, say, a collection of Dutch masters, because I don't happen to understand Dutch masters, and to my untutored perception they're simply ugly and depressing. Excuse me, but you don't live near here, do you?"

She shook her head. "No, I came by train this morning. I am going from place to place, trying to sell these."

Bunk nodded thoughtfully. "I was wondering," he said, "if you would accept a commission?"

She stared at him round-eyed and echoed the word beloved of every struggling artist.

"I was thinking only yesterday of getting somebody to paint a view of the house. And there couldn't be a better time than now, with the gardens looking so jolly. What would be your terms? Of course I understand that a commission is a very different matter from purchasing something out of your portfolio. And of course you would take time and satisfy yourself with your work."

"I hardly know what to say," she murmured.

"Well, how long would it take?"

"That would depend on the weather. I should want the same light. Of course, if it were fine one day and dull the next, it would take longer."

"Naturally." He hesitated. It would never do to let her suspect charity by offering her too much. "Shall we say ten guineas?" he suggested.

She looked straight at him and shook her head. "I couldn't take that," she said. "I don't think you understand about these things. My work wouldn't be worth it. I am only a beginner."

"But if it's worth it to me?" he suggested gently.

"But it couldn't be. A penny stamp is only worth a penny to anybody."

Bunk began to laugh. "Upon my word," he said, "my first attempt as a patron of art isn't a bit encouraging. Let us suggest an alternative. If I am not satisfied, I won't have the picture at all. If I am just satisfied, I will pay five guineas. If I am delighted, we will call it ten. Will that do?"

She smiled faintly and gave way, but with an air of surrendering to a stronger personality. "Thank you," she said. "Yes, I will accept those terms."

"There's only one thing more, then," said Bunk, proceeding to gather up his purchases. "I believe it is customary to invite the artist to stay in the house while the commission is being executed. I can't do that, as this is an Eveless Eden. There are only my brother and myself. But there is a place in the village where they take visitors during the summer, and I will give you the address. They will be glad to have you, I know, and in the circumstances I must insist on your staying there as my guest."

She uttered the little shaken laugh of a girl on the verge of tears. "I don't know what to say," she murmured. "Either you are being much too kind, or you don't know what a duffer I am."

"Well, it seems we're both duffers," he said lightly. "When would you like to start?"

"I could start this afternoon. My luggage is at the station."

"Good! If my brother or I shouldn't be about, the servants will let you have anything you want. By the way, you know my name, it seems, so mayn't I know yours?"

It was Lucille Mason. Indeed, the signature was staring at him from a corner of one of the drawings.

## II.

NOLLY came in to lunch. He was a freckled, cheerful youth of twenty-two, as tall as his brother, but of a stouter build. The derivation of his name was easily discernible, since his Christian name was Oliver. Nobody quite knew how John had come to be called Bunk.

The two young men led pleasant but not altogether idle lives. Bunk managed the estate, and Nolly helped him, for it was more than one man's job. In his spare time Nolly was a naturalist. He was also a first-class shot and a great fisherman. People were prone to criticise the young

man for vegetating in a country house, but Bunk was glad to have his brother under his supervision. Nolly was one of those good-natured feather-brained young men who required steadyding.

"What have you been up to?" Bunk demanded. "Bug-hunting?"

Nolly clicked his heels together and saluted. "Yes, Sir John."

"All right, stand easy. It's a loathsome hobby, but so long as it amuses you——"

"It might be worse. Just now I am fighting the temptations of my personal devil, who is prompting me to collect stamps. If you see me with a shilling album and a pot of gum, you'll know the worst has happened."

Bunk shook his head. "Fight against it, brave heart," he said. "*Facilis descensus Averni*. In ten years time you may be afflicted with a passion for cigarette cards. By the way, Gabrielle came round with a note from the Rectory."

Nolly pressed his hands tightly to the left side of his chest. "Be still!" he said. "Be still! Stop fluttering, will you? Did she send me her love?"

"I told her I would give her your kind regards. We dine at the Rectory on Thursday."

"How much will you give me if I don't go, Bunk? I'll take a fiver. It pains me to cut out my own brother. I'd stay away for nothing, but times is 'ard."

"I've told them you were doing nothing," said Bunk equably, "so you'd better come. I don't have to apologise for your manners any more—now that they know that they come natural. Oh, by the way, there's a girl coming to paint the house this afternoon."

Nolly stared. "Hardly a one-girl job, is it? And does the house want painting? Only about two months ago the place was so full of honest British workmen that I was afraid a few of them might get mixed up with the food. Fancy finding a couple of plumbers and a whitewasher in your soup! It was a nasty thought."

"I bought a few water-colours of her," said Bunk. "She was travelling with a portfolio full. Poor little thing, she seemed down and out, and the tragic thing was that she was so obviously a lady."

"A perfect lady, you mean," said Nolly facetiously. "Oh, wait a moment, though. By my halidom! Was she carrying under her arm a brown paper parcel about the size of a small mattress?"

"She was."



"She held her own in the triangular dialogue, passing the ball of badinage along as it was passed to her, but



always demurely, always with an air of remembering that the two brothers were patrons and strangers."

"Then I saw her. I wondered who she was and where she came from. They don't grow 'em like that around here. She was genuine eighteen carat. Brother, you have done well."

"I wanted to do her a good turn without letting her know that—well, that it was a good turn, so I asked her to sketch the house. She'll be round after lunch."

Nolly grinned. "I can see you figuring prominently on the black list of the Girls' Friendly Society. This is just my luck. There's been a rise of May-fly, but I must do my duty and stay in. A chaperon's job is irksome, but I never shirked it yet. Here, isn't it time that gong went? Strong emotions always improve my appetite."

Bunk was careful to be out of the way when Lucille arrived. He shut himself up and attended to some correspondence which was more or less urgent. His was a gentle and understanding spirit, and he was afraid of scaring the girl with too great a show of friendliness. He wanted their relations to be as business-like as possible so as to dissolve any lingering suspicion in the girl's mind that he had given her the commission solely to help her.

But he had reckoned without Nolly the susceptible. At four o'clock, when he walked out into the gardens behind the house, he beheld Lucille sitting on a garden chair on the lawn, half screened by an easel and drawing-board, and Nolly was lounging beside her, pipe in mouth.

"Come out of it!" Nolly called. "You're right in the eye of the camera. It's going to be a ripping picture, and if you spoil it by getting into it, there will be woe and desolation in the house."

Lucille smiled. Bunk smiled, too, and came over leisurely. He asked if he might look, and saw that the girl was sketching the outline of the house in pencil.

"That," said Nolly, pointing, "is the little window where the sun comes peeping in at dawn. Miss Mason has got it beautifully. Anybody who wants to see a safety razor dexterously handled has only to watch that window at seven-thirty ack emma weekdays and eight ack emma on Sundays."

"If my brother annoys you," said Bunk, leaning on his crutch, "you have only to tell him to go away, and he'll go. He's a docile youth. I brought him up myself."

"He's been very kind to come and talk to me," said Lucille, working steadily.

"Oh, suspect him when he seems kind. He's merely treating himself to a free

lesson. As soon as your back is turned he'll sneak off and buy a drawing-book, a pencil, a bit of rubber and a box of paints, and set up as an artist. He's a specious vampire."

The girl laughed. "I could only teach him my own mistakes, Sir John. I suppose it's no use trying to convince you that I'm only a beginner? I think I failed when I tried to make you aware of that before."

She seemed brighter and happier already. As they talked on, she held her own in the triangular dialogue, passing the ball of badinage along as it was passed to her, but always demurely, always with an air of remembering that the two brothers were patrons and strangers.

Tea was brought out on to the lawn under a great cedar, and the brothers sowed the seeds of intimacy with Lucille by making her preside at the tea-tray. After tea she left. She wanted to begin painting earlier on the following day, when the shadows were shorter. When she was gone, Nolly turned to his brother.

"We ought to do something for that girl," he said.

"Yes? Insult her, for instance, by offering her a large present of money? I don't know what we can do. We can't keep her here painting the house for all eternity."

"There must be other ways. I got her story out of her."

"You would!"

"Oh, I wasn't inquisitive. I was just saying silly-ass things one minute, and being sympathetic the next. I don't know why it is, but people like to tell me their troubles."

"Yes, you can open an oyster without a knife. Well, go on."

"Her mother died not very long ago. The mother had a tiny annuity which they had both been living on, which died with her. And the girl wasn't trained for any job. She'd just been pottering about learning, as an amateur, and probably being taught by somebody who didn't know the first thing about it. So she did a lot of pot-boilers while her means held out, and now she's trying to sell 'em."

"Poor kid!" said Bunk.

"Exactly! Poor kid! She can't paint for small apples, and she knows it. They say there's a mug born every minute, and it may be true, but they want finding. She may never bump into another like you again."

"And you," said Bunk gently.

"Yes, and me. So you see it can't go on. Don't you think we could find a job for her somewhere. She'd take it like a shot. She's not one of those let-me-starve-in-an-attic-for-art's-sake people. She's got no illusions about her work. I don't think she'd care tuppence if she never touched a paint-brush again."

Bunk inclined his head. "Well," he said, "we shall have to go slow, and it's just as well that there's plenty of time. Didn't Mrs. Leyden say something about keeping a secretary? Gabrielle's always going on strike when she's asked to do typing, and really she's got plenty of other work to do."

Mrs. Leyden, wife to the local rector and mother to Gabrielle, was a writer of books which come under the mysterious category of Sunday reading. Gabrielle admired her mother's talent without admiring the work itself. Mrs. Leyden was naturally a bright and cheerful little woman until she took pen in hand, when she was immediately afflicted with severe attacks of lachrymose sentiment, and had killed more pious crippled crossing-sweepers (with cruel gin-imbibing stepmothers) than any other woman in England.

Nolly looked at his brother approvingly. "These," he said, "are the bright ideas which win competitions. I don't suppose Lucille can type, but she can soon learn. Let us toy with the idea and fling it out to Gabrielle as an airy suggestion. Lucille might be an acquisition to the neighbourhood. There aren't so many people under ninety about here. There have been times when I have been short of a few playfellows."

### III.

On the Thursday afternoon Nolly overcame an inclination to linger at Lucille's elbow and betook himself towards the water-meadows, rod in hand. He had not returned when Bunk entered the garden just before tea-time, and came swinging over the turf, on his sound leg and his crutch, to where Lucille sat painting in the glare of the sun.

The work was getting on towards completion now. She had done her poor best, but the straight lines and sharp angles of the house had shown her up. Under her brush the picture of the house had all the crude lifelessness of a doll's house or a Noah's Ark. Bunk stood a little behind her, devoutly hoping that her eye was prejudiced and could not see how bad it was. Suddenly he stared, craning his neck to the level

of her shoulder. Lucille was steadily and painstakingly painting in a tall yew tree which was not there.

In the picture the yew tree, tall and straight as a post, rose between two of the first-floor windows of the west wing. Bunk stared at the house and back at the canvas, and then at the profile of the painter.

"Why are you putting that in?" he asked almost sharply.

"To break the monotony of brickwork and windows. It's a trick of the trade. It makes a better picture. But if you don't like it, I can take it out."

"No, leave it, please. What made you think of a yew tree, Miss Mason?"

"I don't know. I wanted something to put there. I was thinking and then I fell into a sort of daze. It seemed to me that there *ought* to be a yew tree there. It was just as if I remembered seeing one."

"The queer thing is," said Bunk, clearing his throat, "that there used to be one on that very spot."

She gave him a swift sidelong glance. "How extraordinary! But I never saw it. I hadn't seen the house before."

"It was cut down about a hundred years ago. An ancestor of mine revenged himself on the poor tree for a lost daughter, and cut it down. It's one of the few bits of tradition we have. The Brimptons didn't come here until the middle of the eighteenth century."

Lucille said nothing. She was staring straight before her, her fine eyes veiled and glassy.

"She eloped with the son of a yeoman farmer," Bunk continued. "She was a tremendous tomboy, that Elinor Brimpton, for she climbed out of her window and down the yew tree after she had been locked in her room. That's the window up there, to the right of the tree you have put in. I wonder what made you put it there."

The girl shivered slightly, looked at him, and looked away.

"An ancestress of mine was born in your house," she said in a low voice. "Perhaps that same Elinor Brimpton. It would have been at about that time."

He was staring at her in blank amazement. "Then you're a kinswoman of ours!" he exclaimed.

"A very distant one, perhaps. If you have family records, you will see that this Elinor Brimpton—or some other girl of that period—eloped with a man named Mason. I felt all along that I knew the house, and



yet I knew that I hadn't been here before. It's a very common feeling, I believe. I never thought until now that it might mean anything."

"I believe Mason was the name," exclaimed Bunk, a little catch in his voice. "But the yew tree! Good Heavens, the yew tree!"

"I seemed to miss something. I didn't know what it was, for a long time, and then suddenly I knew."

Bunk was leaning heavily on his crutch. "I don't know what it is," he said. "Re-incarnation, inherited memory—call it what you will—but it makes you one of us, Lucille."

As if in acknowledgment of kinship he called her by her Christian name.

"Why didn't you tell me who you were at the very beginning?" he demanded.

"Because you'd never even heard of me. Because the kinship was so remote. It comes only through a girl who ran away with an inferior three or four generations back. It would have been a presumption on my part to mention it to you when I was a vagrant, coming to your door with a few worthless sketches."

Bunk lowered his crutch and sat himself on the grass. Lucille made no attempt to continue working, but turned in her chair and faced him.

"Lucille," he said, "this is all rather wonderful. We will leave out for the present the miracle of the yew tree. As to what may lie at the back of that, we shall never get far beyond speculation. What concerns Nolly and me is that you're one of us. There's a Brimpton strain in you. For the sake of that you must take what otherwise we should have found difficult to offer, and you impossible to accept. You told Nolly your story. He told it to me. Lucille, you must let us do something for you."

She met his gaze for a moment, then lowered her eyes.

"Thank you, Sir John. You are very kind, but I am afraid—you see, I have no claim on you. And—and I could always have had charity for the asking."

"Not Sir John now. Bunk to you, if you please. And I wasn't thinking of charity. If we could find you a pleasant job with nice people, where you could earn your living congenially——"

"Ah!" she exclaimed, with a little sigh.

"There is a friend of ours at the Rectory, a Mrs. Leyden, who is always talking of getting a secretary——"

"Has she a daughter named Gabrielle?" Lucille interrupted hastily.

"Gabrielle is one of our pet particular friends. Do you, by any miracle, know her?"

"I was at school with her," Lucille said simply.

Bunk exploded, choking back an inclination to swear out of sheer amazement.

"Providence," he said, "is taking a hand in the affairs of all of us. Gabrielle is our adopted sister. We need another to be saved from quarrelling over her. That paint brush of yours is really an olive branch, Lucille."

#### IV.

GABRIELLE received the news that evening with mingled enthusiasm and incredulity. She well remembered Lucille Mason at school.

"I'm about three years older than she is," said Gabrielle, "and with that hideous disparity in our ages we couldn't be best friends in those days. But I remember she was a dear, and I liked her quite a lot."

She glanced defiantly from one to the other of her parents.

"Whether mother has her for a secretary or not, she's coming to us for a long stay. There's hardly a soul for me to talk to about here but Bunk and Nolly, and they're more well-meaning than intelligent when it comes to discussing hats and frocks."

After dinner she cycled into the village to the house where Lucille was lodging and brought her back, tremulous and nervous, and shy and laughing, like a child lately frightened and now restored to a sense of security.

She captivated the Rector and Mrs. Leyden with the same effortless ease which had served for the subjugation of Bunk and Nolly. It was, as Nolly said afterwards, "a walk-over for her." Nothing was said then and there about the secretaryship, but it was arranged that Lucille should transfer her luggage and herself to the Rectory on the following evening. And Gabrielle went about purring like a kitten which had found at long last another kitten to play with.

Late that night, when it was time for the visitors to depart, the brothers walked into the village with Lucille, and Gabrielle accompanied them, since their way home from the village would take them past the Rectory again. Gabrielle gave them each a hand when at last they halted to say "Good night" at the Rectory gate.

"I have been wondering," she said, her

eyes shining, "which of you two is the biggest dear."

"Bigger, and not biggest, in comparing two," Nolly murmured. "But I excuse the lapse. You mean well."

"If I thought you had any real doubt about it," said Bunk, "I should down my young brother with my crutch, *à la* Long John Silver. Good night, small sister, and sleep well. When may we come round to the Orphanage to tea?"

"The Orphanage?"

"Thanks to our well-meant efforts, it looks like becoming one. At least, we've provided you with a nucleus. Good night. And if my young brother comes round too often, just mention it to me."

Ten minutes later, when the two brothers were walking up the avenue in the cold ivory moonlight, Bunk, for no apparent reason, suddenly burst out laughing.

"If you've just seen a joke I made yesterday," said Nolly, "I'm glad it wasn't wasted. You're slow, but I will say you're reliable. What are you so beastly merry about?"

"I was only thinking of something. And it's more pathetic than funny. Suppose a lame sparrow told you a good old-fashioned, thumping whopper to get away from the hawks and into a nice comfortable cage?"

"Sparrows don't talk," said Nolly, who did not deal in parables. "You're thinking of parrots."

\* \* \* \* \*

Lucille was due to appear at Tapton Admiral on the following afternoon to complete the water-colour sketch of the house. But she did not come at half-past two, the usual time, and at half-past three there was still no sign of her.

"Gabrielle's got hold of her," Nolly remarked. "The spring sales are on, and they're talking clothes. They're looking at the bargains on the front page of *The Daily Guest*, and asking each other if they can be real silk for one and eleven-three."

Bunk said nothing, but presently he stumped out to the garage, hoisted himself into a two-seater, and drove down the avenue and round into the village. He stopped outside the premises of Mr. Silcock, the saddler, and knocked at the side door.

"Is Miss Mason in?" he inquired of the girl who opened the door.

"Well——" began the girl, and looked embarrassed.

"Of course," said Bunk, "if she told you to say she wasn't, you're in rather a cleft

stick. I think I'll walk into the sitting-room and see for myself."

He stumped down the passage and knocked at the sitting-room door. Having received no answer, he opened it and swung himself across the threshold. Lucille was crouching in a chair, sobbing, her face covered by her hands. At her feet were some torn fragments of drawing paper. A glance at them sufficed to show him that it was the picture of Tapton Admiral which had met with summary destruction.

"You shouldn't have done that, Lucille," he said gently.

She did not move, only she spoke to him in a shaken, muffled voice from behind her hands.

"It's—it's rotten!" she gasped. "And you'd have given me ten guineas for it if I'd let you."

"Not unless I liked it," he corrected her gently.

"But you were going to say you liked it."

He went to her side and laid a hand on one of her heaving shoulders. "You're a silly kid," he said. "And now you'll have to do like other silly kids and start over again."

"No!" she cried, snatching away her hands and sitting up. "I'm going away. I'm never going to see you again. I'm not going to stay at the Rectory. I'm going away this afternoon."

Bunk smiled at her, and when he spoke his voice was dry but kindly.

"That's rather drastic, isn't it? May I ask what we've done to deserve this?"

"What you've done!" Once more she covered her face with her hands and rocked herself to and fro. "You've played the game—you and your brother. That's what you've done. And I haven't. Perhaps I don't know how. You were sweet to me, both of you. And I—I returned thanks by lying to you, to worm my way further into your sympathies."

Bunk smiled and shook his head. "It couldn't have been done," he said. "You'd reached the centre of gravity already."

"I lied about that yew tree. I knew the story. I knew it used to be there. I *am* Lucille Mason, a distant kinswoman of yours, but I wanted an excuse for letting you know it. I wanted to give you an excuse for making life easier for me, and I wanted to have an excuse for letting you. And I thought, if I did it like that, pretended to have inherited a memory or—or be a reincarnation or something, you might



think that a special Providence had brought us together. I—I felt that I couldn't fight the world alone any more. I wanted help, and—and couldn't ask for it straight out. I was so miserable and tired and lonely."

He knelt beside her on his one sound leg and took her hands. "You poor little lonely thing!" he said. "Why are you telling me all this?"

She tried to snatch her hands away. "Oh, I suppose I've got a rag of decency left. I couldn't go on deceiving you, after all. You've been so—so splendid to me."

"Don't you talk to young Nolly like that. He's more prone than I am to believe nice things about himself. Now, just you dry your eyes, and dab a bit of powder here and another bit there, and then I'll drive you up to the Rectory."

She began to struggle once more. "I'm not going! How can I go? I should never be able to get away from my lie. They'd always be saying what a wonderful thing it was that I should have thought that yew tree ought to be there, and talking about it as a—as a sort of ghost story."

"They won't say a word about it," said Bunk firmly, "for the very good reason that I didn't mention it. I haven't even told Nolly."

She stared at him, stupefied for the moment. "You haven't! But— Oh, it doesn't matter! I mustn't stay here. You'd never trust me again after the way I deceived you."

A slow smile illumined Bunk's face. "Yes," he said, "you deceived me—for nearly five minutes."

His smile broadened as she exclaimed aloud.

"You see," he continued gently, "I don't happen to believe in reincarnations and weird happenings, and it occurred to

me that if you knew anything about the family at all, you'd know about that tree—particularly as it was your ancestress who climbed down it. We've got an engraving of the house, over a hundred years old, with the yew exactly where you put it. You might easily have seen a copy of the same engraving. Also I've a knack of putting myself in another person's place. It's a knack which sheds a strong light on other people's motives."

She drew a deep breath and looked at him with all the anxiety of a child who has done something naughty, but is at the same time conscious that the grown-up mind is amused, and hopes on that account to be forgiven. His tone had been whimsical, kindly, almost paternal.

"Now, Cousin Lucille—henceforward Sister Lucille," he continued, "I'm going to drive you down to the Rectory. We need you among us to leaven the ancients. You'll earn your bread and salt—don't be afraid about that. And in future you'll have a sister and two big brothers. We want you for a playfellow, Lucille. There's plenty of room for you in our playroom, and cupboards full of toys. Now go and get ready. But first——"

He leaned towards her, drawing her by the hands. She hesitated for a moment, a wan smile on her lips, and then suddenly pressed her little warm, wet face against his.

"I've been horrible!" she whispered.

"You haven't, you poor kid! Heaven knows what I should have done had I been you!"

An hour later Gabrielle was showing her to her room. The traces of tears were gone, and if any heaviness lingered in Lucille's heart, it was not because her conscience accused her, but because she and Bunk had kissed only as children.

## VESPER SONG.

**T**HE sound of mowing in this garden-close  
Enters the silence, but disturbs it not;  
Still can I hear rose murmuring unto rose,  
And twilight's wings above the strawberry-plot.

Here restlessness finds rest, and here I breathe  
A thousand tangled perfumes of delight:  
Oh, for my vesper offering let me wreath  
One song, one thankful song, before the night!

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

# THE DISTRESSED GOLFER

## HOW HE CAN GET ON GOOD TERMS WITH HIMSELF

By PERCY ALLISS

*Professional to the Wanstead Golf Club, Welsh Champion in the years 1921 and 1922,  
and Champion of Essex in 1923*

*In a Chat with Clyde Foster*

I HAVE never had a golf lesson in my life, says Alliss. That was because I never needed one at the start of my golf, which is the time to take lessons for the majority of golfers. I began in the midst of golf. I saw nothing else and talked nothing else all day. I inhaled golf, so to speak. Golf was not part of my life—it was all of it.

I was a professional golfer from my earliest years, in the sense that all I ever earned, first as a caddie and as an apprentice club maker, at Hallandshire Golf Club, Sheffield, was at golf. I was either carrying clubs for a fee, making clubs for wages, swinging clubs while in the professional shop, or out on the course in the early morning or in the evening during my spare time. The golf craze caught me young, and the game never presented any difficulties to me.

I keep these things in mind when teaching pupils now. It helps me to appreciate their difficulties as they try, try, try again to apply the lessons I give them. I realise how different their cases are from mine, and when they marvel at the shots I make, and fervently wish they could play them, I feel that I do not deserve their praises.

Every professional knows how easy it is for him to play well. He also knows that if only he could perform on great occasions in his natural easy style, more of the spoils would come his way. The strain of golf in tournaments is least felt by a professional when he is playing easily. The same is true of you, whatever your class may be. The easiest golfer I ever watched was Harry Vardon. I made him my model there and then. "This game is all swinging and timing," I said to myself, while watching Vardon. "There is not a straight line in

it, no matter what club you are using." That is my theory of golf and the basis of my teaching, in a few words.

Sometimes I tell pupils that there are five or six ways of playing almost every shot, perhaps with equally good results. But the best of all the various ways is the one that is smoothest and simplest—the style that involves the smallest expenditure of energy, and gives the greatest pleasure to the player, professional or amateur.

You are not playing golf properly unless you are enjoying the game. The spirit of golf is not in you at any other time. The "golf face" should not be a drawn one; it should indicate a quiet pleasure. The nerves should tingle, not jangle. The only defeat to worry over is the one you inflict on yourself by getting out of tune, or, if you like, "out of time."

At the beginning and all the way through a course of lessons I do everything in my power to keep my pupils confident and comfortable. With this object, I avoid all complications. I tell them as little as possible, while yet imparting all that is necessary. To throw a hundred hints at a pupil's head would be madness in me and maddening to him. A hundred hints, did I say? A score would be equally absurd. The very greatness of golf as a game lies in its simplicity. But do you think it is easy to get men and women to believe this? I wish it were. But it is not.

They are so apt to try to do too much that they make their own difficulties, and then, day after day, week after week, year after year, go on blundering—a good game to-day and a heart-breaking game to-morrow—till golf seems to be the most irritating game ever invented. They almost

wish they could give it up. But the spell has taken too firm a hold; they cannot shake it off. A man once said in my hearing: "Golf has made a slave of me. I play no better than when I played ten years ago. Instead of golf doing me good, it is turning me into a bundle of jumpy nerves."

His was a very bad case. I took him in hand and made him play easily, regardless of length—not slackly, but smoothly and comfortably. He confessed afterward that there might be hope for him at last. This distressed golfer ultimately acquired some degree of self-control and club-control.

Perhaps the best way to go on from this point would be to suppose that I am giving an hour's lesson to a golfer in despair. I do not ask him to tell me what is the matter. It is only necessary that he should play a few shots for me to discover for myself what his trouble is. This places me in the position—such as a doctor would wish to have with every patient who consults him—of being able to prescribe a sure and certain cure, provided the pupil will do as I tell him. He must not mix my instructions with his own or anybody else's theories. That would leave his case worse than before.

Suppose his stance to be all wrong. He feels and looks extremely uncomfortable. I suggest that he should stand easy, with the left foot an inch or two behind the right. "How do you feel now?" I ask. If he says "All right," I judge by the look of him whether he is really saying so because he does not wish to differ from me. I may try him with a perfectly square stance to see whether that suits him better; for there is only one hard and fast rule about the stance—namely, that it shall inspire the golfer with the knowledge that he can command the shot about to be made, no matter what the shot may be. "Get comfortable," I keep on telling distressed golfers.

In all this I am laying down the groundwork for balance, the importance of which is obvious. Without balance every golf shot will be botched, correct swinging and timing becomes impossible, and things go wrong in all manner of ways. Balance will be found to be a simple remedy for most of the ills of golf.

I next say: "There is no hurry." It is usually needful to keep on repeating that warning, for hurry is a very common and disastrous fault with the bulk of golfers.

Now I come to a very vital point. Pupils, especially such as are trying to bring their

handicaps down to a creditably low level, often ask at what part of the swing hitting begins. I reply: "At no particular part." They smile incredulously, and I have to tell them that I mean what I say. They ask whether it is not the fact that hitting begins when the club in its descent is about two or three feet from the ball. I reply that it may be so, but it is better not to think so, as with such an idea in your mind the tendency is to jerk the club at that stage of the downward swing, in the effort to increase the speed.

I begin, or, rather, prepare, to hit the ball the moment I take the club-head away from it at the start of the swing. The idea in my mind is gradually to increase the speed of the club's movement all the way round to the top of the swing and back again, without any pause or sudden increase of pace anywhere.

The club should be swung easily upwards in a wide arc, and not lifted off the ground, while the body remains balanced between the feet—in no case must the head or shoulders go out beyond the right foot—until the club-head is almost horizontal over the right shoulder, pointing in the direction of the flag.

It is a great mistake to overswing, as by so doing control of the club is very likely to be lost, or, at any rate, not to be so complete as it should be. Women are very apt to overswing, with the result that by the time the club-head is brought to the ball it has very often gone out of the right track. The hands, too, will generally be found to have gone in front of the club-head, owing to the special effort required to come down from so great a distance. It will never do to "pull" the club down. Far too many people overswing as if they thought this method gave some distinction to their style.

I do not advocate a swing that is full short. That would be going to the other extreme, but even a short swing is safer than an abnormally long swing. The whole idea of swinging the golf club is to bring a flick into the shot. To effect this, the body is turned backwards as the club rises and "re-turned" forwards as the club-head falls. The wrists deliver the blow.

Meantime the feet are playing their part in the shot. You cannot play golf with both feet flat on the ground, though there are many good golfers, even some great ones, whose left heel is raised so slightly in making the backward swing



Photo by]

PERCY ALLISS.

[Sport &amp; General.

No thought of having hit the ball should come into the mind at all, lest that should have the effect of arresting the follow-through. It is better to think that the club-head has only half accomplished its work, and that it must go on until it finishes well over the left shoulder, but without being lifted or heaved there.

It should travel forwards and upwards by the momentum of the down swing as the right heel rises to let the right shoulder go through with the club. All this should be done in a perfectly easy manner, while the club is firmly controlled, without, however, the muscles of the arm being tightened. I can always tell whether a pupil is over-tightening his fore-arm by the look on his face, for the features will be tightened as well.

Let me put all this in another way. You cannot have any separate movements in the golf swing, such as speeding up the club on coming to the ball.

that it almost seems as if they did not pivot at all.

I can hardly imagine a worse fault than that of rising too much on the left toe, thereby throwing the body out of balance. When the club-head has reached the top of the backward swing, the left heel should be slightly off the ground, while the right leg has been tightened. As the club descends—without any thought of hitting from any point whatever—the left heel should gradually drop, so that it comes down at the moment the club-head reaches the ball. The heel may fall the fraction of a second sooner than this without any harm being done, but it must not fall any appreciable time later.

Everything must work together smoothly. To hit hard, you do not put in any special body movement, but use the arms and shoulders with the wrists.

Let the club follow through as far as your arms will permit without swaying the body forward. You must not stop the body and throw out the arms by themselves, so to speak. If you could be photographed playing a shot in this way, every picture would tell its own tale against you.

Let the arms go round and finish with the left leg straight and the left heel on the ground. The left foot should have then regained exactly the same position as that which it occupied when you took up your stance. Should this not be the case, it is

almost inevitable that the shot will be ruined or seriously damaged. Look at any photograph showing the finish of a good golfer's swing, and you will observe that his left foot has come down as I have here indicated.

If you are addicted to the habit of falling forward on the ball, the preventive for this is to feel your weight resting on both heels as you take up your stance to address the ball. Should the weight fall on the toes, the effect is to topple forward as the shot is delivered.

If hitherto you have not been conscious of resting on the heels—without actually digging them into the ground—some improvement will immediately result to your golf by taking thought of this.

It is a great aid to maintaining a perfect balance. Just as the shot is made, the body should be resting about equally on both feet. Unless this is done, much power will go out of the shot. There is no commoner fault in golf, and none more serious, than that of having the left heel still off the ground when the club-head comes into contact with the ball.

When I tell anyone how to make a shot, I do not consider I am done with him until he is made clearly to understand the reason why. Merely to do as I tell him would produce very poor results in my absence, because he might easily forget what I said. But when he understands the reason for everything I have told him, then he will be able at all times to put my instructions into practice.

Take the habit of falling forward on the ball. Anyone will immediately see that this is caused by throwing the weight of the body on to the toes. The remedy is to rest on the heels.

That old and stubborn habit, seen in operation so frequently wherever you go, swaying backwards as the club is taken upwards, and forwards as the club is brought down again, is apparently not so easily got rid of as one might imagine. It arises, I suppose, from the golfer's determination to administer some terrific blow to the ball. But a small boy, standing easily over his shot, will often drive farther than a heavy-weight boxing champion who sways. The explanation is very simple. If the club-head is brought forward in this fashion, the shot is robbed of its flick and the ball is in some degree pushed away.

You cannot push a golf ball any distance, nor can you drive it, as it should be driven,

if the club-head lags behind it or slithers across it. The only intelligent remedy for swaying that ever I have known is simply to keep in mind that the body should revolve within the space that is bounded by the feet.

This has some bearing on the width of the stance. If the feet are brought too close together, then both shoulders may be outside them. But if the stance is normal, as it should be, neither too wide nor too close, what I have said will apply.

So far as the width of the stance is concerned, everything will depend on the stature of the player. A very tall man with very long legs will, of course, take a wider stance than a very short man with very short legs. To each of these, and to all whose measurements fall between them, I have always the same thing to say: "Stand easy."

Coming to the use of iron clubs, the swing is made in practically the same way as with wooden clubs. I mean by this that the thought of swinging, not hitting, should be borne in mind. With the iron it is only necessary to stand a little nearer the ball and contrive to hit it just before the club-head has arrived at the bottom of the downward swing. The ball is reached sooner than the ground, and the instant it is despatched the iron grazes the ground in front, while at the same time it follows through as far as the arms will let it.

If you look at the teeing grounds of one-shot holes after a professional tournament, you will find them pretty badly cut about. It will be necessary to alter the tees next day. I do not mean that chunks of turf are torn up, but that irons or mashie have been used in the way I have been explaining.

I never allow a pupil to tee up when using any of the iron clubs. The ball should simply be laid down on some convenient spot. Why should there be any occasion for teeing up while using a club that is set back like an iron or a mashie?

It is only due to lack of faith in themselves that players build tees at such times. The shot must be robbed of some length when the iron is used with a tee. Take a one-shot hole of 180 or 190 yards, the chances are that by teeing up for it the ball will pitch into one or other of the bunkers on the near side of the flag, instead of pitching on the green and stopping there. The shot will be shortened.

Of all shots, perhaps the most coveted to-day is what might be called the "stop-

and-pitch" shot with the mashie or the mashie-niblick. Some excellent exponents of this shot play it chiefly with the right hand, almost stopping the left arm as the ball is struck. I have never found any occasion for adopting this method.

I believe that the shot should be played with both hands, the head being rigidly kept down till the ball is well away. You must follow through here, just as with every other shot in golf. But it must be clearly understood that following through does not mean trailing the club-head as far as possible along the ground after the ball has been despatched.

Instead of this, the club-head should be swung upwards, rather than forwards, if the desired under-spin is to be given to the ball, without which it will run across the green instead of pulling up and stopping on it.

An important point about making this shot is that the club must be wielded firmly. Failing this, the shot will be short, as the player, to use an Americanism, "quitted" from the evident fear of going too far. There is little danger of overdoing shots of this description so long as the head is kept down. That is the thing to remember.

It would be as well to rest content with imagining you see the ball in the air rather than lifting your head to look for it. Nothing has brought me more expressions of thankfulness from pupils and others than this little piece of golf wisdom.

In all golf shots I teach the Vardon grip—that is, the placing of the small finger of the right hand over the forefinger of the left hand, while the thumb of the left hand rests in the palm of the right

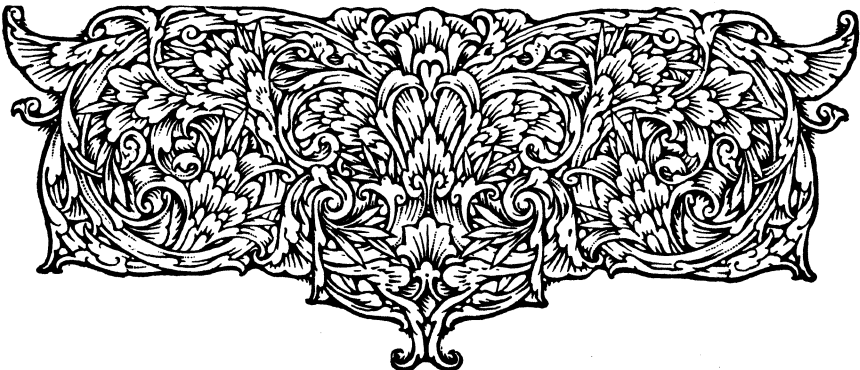
hand. But everybody knows the Vardon grip now.

Much is heard in these days about the straight left arm in taking the club back. The principle of this is all right. But for a person who starts golf about the time men stop cricket, it is desirable to use some discretion with this left arm theory. The idea, of course, is to get the club well back so as to bring it to the ball well from behind.

But the left arm can be stiffened too much. The elbow joint should not be forgotten. If it were not placed there by Nature for the purpose of wielding a golf club, it is most excellently suited to this end. Let the left arm be taken back close to the body, without being dragged along it. By this means the left wrist will fall under the shaft at the top of the swing, without being deliberately turned inwards. The elbow must then be bent, but only slightly, while the club shaft lies an inch or two away from the point of the shoulder.

If nothing in the nature of a hitch or a jerk is permitted to break the rhythm of the swing, if the body is turned and "re-turned" while resting comfortably on the feet, if no swaying or falling forward comes into the shot, if no thought of beginning to hit at any particular stage of the downward swing comes into the mind, then everything should turn out satisfactorily.

A last word on putting, which some say cannot be taught. I am half inclined to agree with them. What more can be said than this? Cultivate a nice smooth swing, stand easy and firmly, then strike the ball instead of merely tapping it, and let the putter follow after it with the even motion of a pendulum.





"'Put it in your pocket, Ronnie,' she ordered. 'The game's finished.'"

# THE FINAL SPIN

By A. WHATOFF ALLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

**J**ULIE GRAYSON seated herself on a settee in the hotel foyer, picked up a copy of *The Morning Standard* and frowned at it ferociously. It was all perfectly impossible, she told herself again, as she stared at the meaningless lines of print. Things couldn't go on like this. It might be vastly entertaining to Ronnie Cartwright to play golf with her and motor with her and tell her, as he had told her, in his casual, flippant way, almost every day since they had met a month ago, that he adored her and was half inclined to propose to her, but it amused her no longer. It was an effort now to reply to him in the bantering vein which at first had seemed so easy. His flippancy jarred now. Jarred? It made her want to scream.

The obvious thing, she told herself, was to go home. She couldn't go on indefinitely damping her pillow and burying her head in cushions because Ronnie was pleased to amuse himself at her expense. Ronnie wouldn't miss her. He would still have his golf and his motors; he would still be the same careless, casual, irresponsible Ronnie, incapable of being serious, treating life as an immense joke, tossing a coin in that absurd way of his to avoid the effort of

making up his mind. Very soon, no doubt, he would find someone else to adore, someone else to whom he would be half inclined to propose. Yes, she had better go home. And yet, if Ronnie were serious, and she went away. . . .

"Julie, you should know better," said a reproachful voice beside her.

She glanced up at him and smiled. "Hullo, Ronnie!" she said, patting the seat invitingly. "If you can bend your long, lean self sufficiently, you may sit down and explain."

"Your ignorance distresses me," he said, seating himself beside her. "You ought to know that your paper should be upside down. Heroines who pucker their brows and are only pretending to read a newspaper always give that clue to the hero. But congratulations on the puckered brow. It was excellently done."

"But I really was reading, Ronnie," she protested.

He took the newspaper from her lap and scrutinised it carefully. "Births, Deaths, Marriages, In Memoriam, Personal, Legal Notices, Tenders, Sales by Auction," he read. "You can take your choice, Julie; there's nothing else on this page."

"Personal," she laughed, touching the column with the tip of her finger.

He regarded her anxiously. "Julie," he said, "this is horrible. Only people with old false teeth for sale read the Personal Column. At your tender age, when the wisdom teeth are still struggling towards the light——"

"I always read it," she assured him. "You never know; one of these days there may be a message for me. 'Julie, my heart still yearns for you, dearest.—Jack,' or something like that. It would all be abbreviated, of course. Please remember that, Ronnie. If ever we have a quarrel, and part in anger and vanish from each other's lives, and then, after years of torturing suspense, you repent of your cold and callous conduct, and determine to swallow your pride and eat humble pie, as of course you would——"

"Should I?"

"Naturally, Ronnie. You wouldn't expect me to do the swallowing, would you? If ever that happens, you can put a few lines in the Personal Column of *The Morning Standard*, and I shall be sure to see them. But I shan't answer unless it's properly abbreviated."

He nodded. "All vowels shall be ruthlessly cut," he assured her. "What about golf?"

"If you like, Ronnie."

"Or a drive in the car? You look adorable in the car, Julie."

"And divine on the links," she added. "I leave it to you."

"Better toss for it," he said, and began to fumble in his waistcoat pocket in search of a coin. "Heads it's golf, Julie; tails it's——"

Julie, the pucker again between her eyebrows, rose quickly from her seat. "Please don't toss for it, Ronnie," she said sharply. "We'll play golf." She turned from him abruptly and went in search of her clubs.

Five minutes later, when, golf bag in hand, she went out through the swing door of the hotel, she found Ronnie, with feet planted well apart, hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a multitude of golf clubs slung across his back, thoughtfully surveying a car which stood by the kerb, a shining, silvery, graceful creature, shaped like a torpedo, and with an exhaust pipe which struck Julie as being many sizes too large for its slender body.

"Ready, Ronnie," she announced, touching him lightly on the sleeve.

"Forty-five horse-power, Julie," he told her, as they walked away together. "Climb

anything—Mount Everest—in top gear. Did you like her?"

Julie shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know much about cars, Ronnie," she answered, "but it looked all right."

"'She,' Julie, please; not 'it,'" he corrected. "I'm wondering whether I'll buy her."

"You've already got two cars, Ronnie. Why buy another?"

"Because I want her, Julie. Never wanted anything so much in my life. You see, with forty-five horse-power—— Don't scowl, Julie; it spoils the graceful contour of your profile."

Julie sighed. "I was only wondering, Ronnie, whether you'll ever—whether you have ever—wanted anything—worth wanting."

"If you think an exquisite forty-five horse-power flying torpedo isn't worth wanting——" he began, but she cut him short with a wave of her hand.

"If you want it so badly, Ronnie," she exclaimed impatiently, "why on earth don't you buy it?"

"Because I can't afford it—at least, I can't afford a flying torpedo and—other expensive things which I want. But I'll have to decide to-day. Chalmers—that's the chap who's trying to sell me the car; he's stopping in the hotel, you know—says he must know one way or the other to-night. I've kept him waiting a week. I expect I'll have to toss up for it."

"I expect you will, Ronnie," she agreed wistfully. "Let's talk of something else."

But it was not until they had reached the links, and Julie, still with the pucker between her eyebrows, had teed her ball and driven it—not very far; you can't drive very far with a pucker between your eyebrows—that they exchanged another word.

"Your go, Ronnie," she said, poking him with the end of her driver as he stood gazing thoughtfully at the horizon. "You can't dream on the first tee; there are others waiting behind you."

"Eh! Oh, yes—my shot," he said. "Sorry, Julie. I was thinking."

He teed his ball, addressed it thoughtfully, sliced it badly, and sighed as he returned his driver to his bag.

"The result of wrong thinking, Ronnie," she told him. "At golf one should think only of golf."

"I was thinking about that car," he confessed.

"Oh, I know," she answered wearily.



"And it's a forty-five horse-power, isn't it?"

He nodded. "It'd climb Mount Everest. But I don't see how you knew—what I was thinking about, I mean."

Julie shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, it wasn't difficult," she said, "because—because—Ronnie, do you ever think—seriously, I mean—of anything but motors?"

"If you only knew, Julie, the laborious hours I have devoted to the study of the perfect stance!" he answered reproachfully.

Julie gave a hard little laugh. "I apologise, Ronnie," she said. "I had forgotten golf. But besides golf and motors, anything?" She shook her head. "Not anything but golf and motors, not anyone but yourself."

"And to think," exclaimed Ronnie, appealing, it seemed, to the distant hills for sympathy, "to think that I have rarely allowed a day to pass without telling her that I adore her!"

Julie bit her lip and trudged along in silence. It was useless trying to talk seriously to Ronnie. After all, she had better go home and leave him to study the perfect stance and drive his exquisite flying torpedo up Mount Everest. It was no good trying to make him realise that life held more enduring things than shining, silvery cars, and sweeter emotions than that of reaching the green in one. He would never realise it, any more than he would ever realise that life was too serious a matter to be regulated by the spinning of a coin. Ronnie was beyond reformation, and she would give up the attempt.

Yet they had played no more than three holes when Julie returned to the attack. They had driven from the tee, and Ronnie, after a careful inspection of the lie of his ball, stood glancing doubtfully, first at the multitude of clubs in his bag, and then at the distant flag.

"I wonder if I ought to use a brassie or an iron," he muttered dubiously. "You see, Julie, if I use a brassie——"

Julie rattled her bag of clubs impatiently. "For Heaven's sake, use one or the other!" she exclaimed irritably. "Pick up your ball and throw it, if you like, but don't stand wondering what to do."

He glanced at her quickly with puzzled eyes, and his hand hesitated over the head of his brassie. "If I use a brassie, Julie," he explained, "and swing it with my

customary skill, the chances are that my ball will go soaring over the green and dive into the pond beyond. And yet, if I use an iron—— I'd better toss for it."

Suddenly, as he fumbled for a coin, Julie stooped down, picked up his ball and held it out to him. "Put it in your pocket, Ronnie," she ordered. "The game's finished."

For a moment he gazed at her with vaguely troubled eyes, and then he took the ball and dropped it into his pocket. "Just as you like," he said, swinging his bag on to his shoulder, "but I don't see——"

"No, of course you don't see," she said, with a shake of her head. "But it's time you did see—that a man who can never make up his mind, who isn't capable of making a decision for himself, who can't even choose between an iron and a brassie, and must spin a coin to decide it for him, is—is—oh, he isn't a man! He's weak and flabby and—and rather contemptible!"

Ronnie produced his cigarette case and thoughtfully lighted a cigarette.

"There's a bard called Kipling," he began, as he threw away the match. "I fancy you must have forgotten Kipling, Julie. 'If you can make a pile of all your winnings, And risk it on a turn of pitch and toss'—something like that, anyway. That's what I wanted to do—make a pile of all the vast golfing knowledge I have accumulated, which told me that an iron was the correct club to use, risk it on the spin of a coin, and 'be a man, my son.'"

Julie laid a hand on his arm. "Ronnie, I'm serious about this," she said earnestly. "I suppose I've no right, but—but you're spoiling yourself. It isn't only golf. You treat everything in the same way. That car—you can't make up your mind about it, and you'll finally decide by tossing for it. You couldn't choose between golf and a motor drive, and this morning at breakfast I saw you toss up whether you'd have fish or eggs and bacon."

"Fortune deserted me, Julie," he laughed. "The fish was horrible—stuffed with invisible bones and still shivering after its swim. I shall never call tails again."

"It's the same with everything, Ronnie," she went on. "You take nothing seriously. Life is just a plaything to you. Nothing is worth troubling about. You'd treat the really big things just as you treat the small things—laugh and spin a coin, and not really care one way or the other. That's what it comes to—you don't care about anything;

and a man who doesn't care about anything isn't—isn't worth—caring about. A man who has no will of his own, who spins a penny to avoid the trouble of making a decision, is just a shirker. He isn't worth the penny that he spins. And now that I've told you, you can be angry with me if you like. But it wouldn't, of course, be worth while getting angry, Ronnie. Or would it? Perhaps you'd better toss for it."

He stood for a moment intent on examining the glowing end of his cigarette. Then: "Do you realise, Julie," he said, "that we're standing slap in the middle of the fairway, that a crowd is congregating on the fourth tee, vociferously yelling 'Fore!' and that——"

She turned from him abruptly and strode away.

"What you fail to realise, Julie," he said, falling into step beside her, "is that when two sides of a question are equally convincing from whatever angle you consider them, it is useless to prolong the consideration. That isn't Euclid, though it sounds like it. The trouble with me is that I always see both sides; they always seem equally convincing, and, like a wise man, I cast the burden of deciding on the shoulders of Providence. Providence has only once let me down—over the fish."

"Even a fish has a backbone," she told him acidly.

He nodded. "The fish in question had several," he admitted. "*Piscis multivertebatus*, described on the menu as filleted sole. My palate was like a pin-cushion."

Julie made no reply, and they walked on in silence until they reached the hotel. Then, just as she was turning from him, he laid a hand on her arm.

"I've made a decision, Julie," he said.

"Well, Ronnie?"

"Without spinning a coin," he added. "This, Julie, is where your eyes should shine with admiration. I have decided, definitely, emphatically, and irrevocably, that I'll never spin a coin again."

"Is that a promise, Ronnie?"

He nodded. "At least," he added, "I think so. The promise, perhaps, had better date from to-morrow. You see, there's that car business to be settled. If I buy the car from Chalmers——"

But Julie heard no more. She was already striding across the foyer towards the lift.

\* \* \* \* \*

Julie had no longer any doubts about the wisdom of going home. She must

certainly go—to-morrow, she decided, and spent the afternoon in packing her trunk. And when, after tea, she seated herself in an armchair in the palm court, she told herself that Ronnie Cartwright was definitely consigned to the limbo of subjects to be prudently forgotten, and opened her novel.

For a few minutes, while her mind still cast imprudent glances limbo-wards, her eyes travelled along the printed lines, and then her book was gradually lowered until it rested on her knees, and her head turned slowly until she was facing the bank of greenery that hid the rest of the palm court from her view. The voice was unknown to her, but the words were strangely familiar.

"Forty-five horse-power, you know," said the voice. "She'll do eighty when you let her out. And she's top-hole in traffic."

"I bet she'd climb Mount Everest," said the voice of Ronnie wistfully. "But you see, Chalmers—I mean—jolly expensive and all that."

"Kept her down here a week specially for you," said Chalmers in an injured tone. "I'd have sold her half a dozen times in London."

"Of course I'd like her," said Ronnie. "But at that price—I mean—when a chap wants to get married, he has to pull in a bit. Can't afford to get married if I buy the car."

The orchestra struck up, drowned their voices while it whirled through a two-step, and then, with a final crash, was silent again.

"... Hate to let you down," said Ronnie's voice, "but it's jolly awkward, you know. I tell you what, Chalmers. You're a sportsman. I'll toss you for it. Marriage or the car, what? Heads it's marriage, tails I'll buy the car."

There was a mumbled reply from Chalmers, a pause, a "Here goes!" from Ronnie, the tinkle of a coin on the tiled floor, and then Julie, with flaming cheeks and blazing eyes, sped from the palm court, rushed along the corridor, flung herself into a chair in a corner of the lounge, and glared furiously at the wall.

And there, an hour later, he found her alone, her cheeks still aflame, her eyes still blazing.

"Hullo, Julie!" he said, seating himself in the chair beside hers. "I've been looking for you. I want to tell you that I'm a reformed character—serious, sober-minded, strong-willed. I have spun my last coin."

She turned and faced him. "You'll find it cold on Mount Everest," she said frigidly.

He smiled, leaned forward, and laid his hand on hers. "I'm not buying the car, Julie," he said. "There are other things in the world worth far more than cars, you know. I'm serious now, please, so don't take your hand away. I've often been serious, but you wouldn't take me seriously. I wonder how many times I've told you that I adore you?"

"I'm not an adding machine, Ronnie."

"It's true, anyway. I adore you, Julie, and I want you. I don't believe I've ever really wanted anything before."

"I couldn't do eighty, Ronnie, when you

"So you'll amuse yourself with me instead," she flashed. "It came down heads, did it? Oh, don't pretend not to understand, Ronnie. I heard it all—all you said to Mr. Chalmers. 'Marriage or the car, what?' It didn't matter which, did it? If you couldn't have the motor, Julie would do; if you couldn't have Julie, you'd be happy enough with your forty-five horse-power torpedo. That's all I'm worth to you—the cost of a car—and yet you have the insolence to come and tell me that you're serious, that you adore me, that you want me as you have never wanted anything. Anything but the torpedo would



"'Here goes!' from Ronnie, the tinkle of a coin on the tiled floor,

let me out," she told him, staring again at the wall, "and I'm not top-hole in traffic, and I'd never get up Mount Everest in top gear, or do any of the things you prize so highly."

He gazed at her with puzzled eyes. "I'm not buying the car, Julie," he repeated,

have been nearer the truth. If you want an answer——"

"I say, Julie," he protested, "you—you don't understand. Just because you happened to overhear——"

She rose from her chair and stood facing him, with trembling lips and hands tightly

clenched. "There's only one thing I need understand," she said. "Did you or did you not toss up between me and the motor?"

"Oh, yes, I tossed up," he admitted, with a shrug of his shoulders. "But you don't understand. If you'll only let me——"

"Thank you, Ronnie. Please don't

She had seen no more of Ronnie, and it was not until she was well on her journey that she could bring herself to open the



and then Julie, with flaming cheeks and blazing eyes, sped from the palm court."

trouble to explain," she said, with the tinkle of icicles in her voice, turned from him abruptly, and hurried to her bedroom.

The next morning she left the hotel early, drove to the station, and booked for London.

envelope which the hotel porter had thrust into her hand as she passed through the foyer.

"DEAR JULIE," it ran, "you have behaved abominably, but I am not going to

shoot big game. My address, to which you can forward your apology, is 77A, Jermyn Street, W. I don't know your address, but as I have no apology to make, I shall not require it. Yours very soberly and seriously,  
RONNIE."

Julie tore the note into tiny fragments and flung them out of the window.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is not so easy as might be imagined to consign things to the limbo of subjects to be prudently forgotten, and after three weeks of vain endeavour Julie abandoned the attempt. Ronnie, of course, had behaved abominably, detestably, unpardonably—

Unpardonably? Julie shrugged her shoulders. He couldn't, at any rate, expect her to apologise. If there was any apology to be made, it must certainly come from him. But then Ronnie didn't know her address, whereas she did know Ronnie's. It was graven on her mind just as surely as it was scattered in tiny fragments along the railway line. Oh, well, there it was! He couldn't write to her, and she couldn't dream of writing to him, and she didn't care, anyway. All the same, if Ronnie were as wretched about it as she was. . . . Julie frowned about it a good deal, and did the puckered brow business very well indeed.

It was not until another week had passed that the frown disappeared, and then it went suddenly, just as Julie's glance was half-way down the Personal Column of *The Morning Standard*.

"Julie, all my flt. Frghthlly srry. I adre u still.—Ronnie."

With a sigh of contentment Julie seated herself at the table, selected a piece of note-paper, inscribed her address in large clear characters at the top, and wrote:

"Ronnie, dear, of course it was all your fault, but I am going to forget that if you call here (see above) to-morrow at tea-time.—Julie."

\* \* \* \* \*

Julie smiled at herself happily in the mirror when she heard his knock on the door, and then hurriedly crossed the room, seated herself on the couch, summoned the pucker between her eyebrows, picked up *The Morning Standard* and gazed at it intently. An eternity passed while he closed the door, crossed the room, and stood for a moment in silence beside the couch. Then: "So you've learnt better now, Julie," he said quietly.

She flung aside the paper. "If you've only come to gloat over me——" she began, starting to her feet.

But he waved her back to the couch and sat down beside her. "I mean about the paper," he explained. "It really was upside down this time."

She smiled and shrugged her shoulders. "Well, Ronnie?" she demanded.

"I'm going to do now what you wouldn't let me do before," he said. "I'm going to explain, and the heroine—that's you, Julie—is going to listen without interrupting. Afterwards I'll listen to her—apology."

Julie settled herself comfortably in the corner of the couch.

"I said 'her apology,' Julie," he reminded her.

"I know you did, Ronnie, but there's no reply. Get on with the explanation."

"What you fail to realise," he said, "is that there may be two sides to a question, both equally convincing——"

"Euclid again, Ronnie?"

"—and that whereas I see them both, you don't," he went on. "There was the question of that car—the forty-five horsepower, you know."

She nodded. "It would climb Mount Everest—in top gear—wouldn't it?"

"And there was the question of you. You thought I tossed up whether I'd marry you or buy the car. So I did. You were heads, and the car was tails. You won."

He paused, fumbled in the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat and produced a penny. "That's the chap I tossed with," he said, laying it heads upwards on the palm of her hand.

She glanced first at him, then at the coin, and then again at him. "It seems a very poor sort of explanation, Ronnie," she said.

"Two sides to a question," he reminded her. "Turn it over."

Wonderingly she obeyed, turned the coin over, turned it over again, gazing first at one side and then at the other with bewildered eyes.

"But—but—there's—there's a head on each side," she stammered.

He nodded. "Special coin kept for the purpose of tossing," he explained. "It belongs to the right-hand waistcoat pocket. There's another with tails on both sides which belongs to the left-hand pocket. They reside in separate pockets to avoid accidents."

For a moment she gazed at him in

silence. Then: "So you didn't—really—toss for me—at all?" she stammered.

He shook his head. "I never really toss for anything at all," he told her. "It's too risky. I might have to do something I don't want to do. It's silly to toss until you've made up your mind."

"But, Ronnie, isn't it horribly dishonest?"

"Horribly, Julie. But I couldn't get rid of Chalmers in any other way. I only toss with myself, as a rule, but Chalmers was becoming a nuisance. I didn't want his rotten car——"

"Oh, Ronnie!"

"—as much as I wanted you, Julie. I couldn't have both, so out came the coin. And now I await the heroine's apology!"

"Apology? Oh, but, Ronnie, it was all your fault! You said it was—in the advertisement."

"Advertisement?"

She nodded, rose from the couch, picked up the paper, and pointed to the line in the Personal Column.

"F-l-t stands for fault, doesn't it?" she demanded.

Ronnie read it, re-read it, and then gazed at her in bewilderment.

"I say, Julie, you know," he began, "I didn't——"

"Don't you say you didn't mean it, Ronnie," she pleaded. "Why not own up that you realised that you owed me an apology, that you swallowed your pride, and put in the advertisement because you couldn't—do—without me? If you didn't put it in——"

"Oh, I put it in all right," he admitted. "Remembered you always read the Personal Column, and—and just put it in."

"I mean, if you didn't put it in for that reason——"

"I did, Julie—for that reason and no other," he assured her, picking up the coin and slipping it into the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat. "And I'd have gone on putting it in for all eternity if you hadn't answered. There ought to be a pretty good discount for an eternal series of insertions. But I say, Julie, that large, pathetic tear—what on earth is there to cry for?"

"Happiness, Ronnie," she sighed contentedly. "But I want my hanky. It's in my bag—over there—on the table."

Ronnie rose, opened the handbag, pulled

out the handkerchief and tossed it to her, and then he stooped and disappeared from view behind the table.

Julie wiped her eyes and glanced towards the spot where he should have been.

"Disappearance of the hero," she laughed. "What on earth are you supposed to be doing, Ronnie?"

"I'm reading," came the answer—"reading a bit of paper."

"A bit of paper?"

"Bit of paper that fell out of your bag."

Julie sprang to her feet. "Ronnie, you haven't any right——" she began angrily, but he waved her into silence with the narrow slip of paper in his hand, and sat beside her on the couch.

"Interesting reading, Julie," he said. "Listen! '*The Morning Standard*. 543, Fleet Street, E.C. 3. Received of Miss J. Grayson the sum of ten shillings and sixpence for one insertion in Personal Column (one line).' What about dishonesty now?"

"Oh, Ronnie!" she exclaimed reproachfully. "And you told me it was you who put it in!"

For a few moments they surveyed each other in silence, with bright eyes and lips that struggled to restrain a smile. Then—

"I had to do it, Ronnie," she explained. "You'd never have remembered *The Morning Standard*, and until you gave in and owned that you were wrong, I couldn't possibly write to you, could I? I mean, you were in the wrong—weren't you?—and I had to make you own it somehow."

"I see," said Ronnie.

"And of course I knew you'd agree that you had put the advertisement in when you discovered that I believed you had, because—because——"

"Because, Julie?"

"Because you'd rather—tell any old lie than—than lose me. You would, Ronnie, surely?"

"Any lie, ancient or modern——" began Ronnie solemnly; and then he paused, glanced quickly round the room, and turned again towards her. "I say, Julie, on occasions like this, can we—may I—I mean, does one kiss before or after tea?"

"Toss for it, Ronnie," she laughed. "Heads before tea; tails after tea."

Ronnie's fingers plunged eagerly into the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat.

# BLUEHILLS

By RUTHERFORD CROCKETT

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

"BLUEHILLS? Does she come from Bluehills, then?"  
"Says so—wherever that is. Do you recognise a bond of union, Miss Sheridan?"

Miss Branson (History) crossed her trim ankles, which had a mere bowing acquaintance with the briefest skirts Beechcroft Girls' School in all its collective experience had ever known. Miss Parry (French) admitted the distinction, and when she spoke, truth and charity met together, as a rule, under the banner of a long and seasoned experience.

Beechcroft resident staff were discussing an absent member with that agreeable freedom which the mellow influence of Sunday night engendered. The absence of the Head combined with the unbuttoned leisure of the hour to make an atmosphere which held no rigours and few reticences.

Anne Sheridan (English) regarded Miss Branson's ankles with the admiration which was their due, as she observed: "Bluehills is in Scotland, not far from a place I used to know quite well. It's very lovely country in a quiet way."

"Talk to Miss Payne about it, then, by all means; I only hope you will," said Miss Parry wearily. She was forty-seven, and found her celebrated charity a trifle hard to sustain at times. "I've exhausted every possible subject of conversation without finding one on which she emits more than 'Yes' or 'No,' or 'Do you think so?' or 'It's very nice, I'm sure.'"

Anne waited. Miss Moss, a slim long figure in a distant corner, began to speak just as Miss Branson turned in her chair to resume. "I know one thing she enjoys," she contributed in her rather hoarse, deep voice, "harvesting. She told me so three weeks ago, when I walked to church with her."

"Did you spout the Georgics back at her, then?" Miss Branson, who was a swarthy thirty-nine, valued her carefully-retained juvenilities of speech as another woman might her powder-puff.

Miss Moss's vague smile conveying her inability to add to existing evidence, it was left to Anne to inquire: "Has everyone tried, then?"

"Everyone. Miss Lennox asked her to go swimming with her. 'No, thank you. It's very nice of you to ask me.' Miss Blair offered to take her to a lecture on disarmament, and to lend her *Forward*, that pleasant little international paper with all the long words. 'Thank you. I think it's a very nice paper.'" Miss Branson, erect now, was warming to her theme. "I myself, having long ago given up *Forward*, and slipped backward, lent her *Powder and Patches*. 'Thank you. I think it's a very nice paper.' It wasn't quite the word I'd have used myself, perhaps, but never mind." Miss Branson caught, in profile, the well-known professional hardening of Miss Parry's mouth, and hastened on. "So far as social intercourse and the community go, Miss Payne is an absolute wash-out. I never met anyone with fewer reactions to general ideas, and, of course, as regards discipline and competence—the last word!"

Anne, who loathed "community" life and "social intercourse," as interpreted by Rhoda Branson, with impartial hatred, held her peace. Possibly, she reflected, Rachel Payne's failure to react in general might be explained by a very decided preference for some one idea in particular.

She experimented with this theory a week or two later, finding herself by chance seated next its subject at Miss Parry's annual Christmas party. Rachel Payne was not in her element to-night—she never was, Anne admitted, noting how the business-like frivolity, the heavily-sustained trivialities proper to "community" life seemed to leave her neighbour colder, flatter, more silent than ever. Miss Carey's singing of "Sea-Fever," which usually brought an intense look into junior mistresses' eyes, left Miss Payne's blue inexpressive orbs unstirred. "No musical reactions to be hoped for," Anne decided.

Miss Branson had one or two new anecdotes, which she disseminated while Miss Parry handed the coffee-cups. Anne enjoyed them, though to her they were not new, but she doubted whether Miss Payne even heard. Finally she sat squarely down beside the faded tussore evening garment which clothed Miss Payne with inconspicuousness as with a cloud, and asked the inevitable questions she had prepared, with the results she had anticipated. No, Miss Payne hadn't read any of the books Miss Sheridan mentioned. Yes, Mr. Lawley was a very nice man, and his sermons were very good; no, not too long, just a nice length. Yes, Miss Parry was very kind and so considerate always. No, she hadn't heard "Sea-Fever" before; Miss Carey had a very nice voice and sang very well. It was a very pretty song. Very nice, indeed.

Anne, in despair, plunged. "You know Bluehills, I hear?" Rachel Payne's long, colourless face changed, breaking into furrows like a field under the ploughshare. Her blue eyes drew in all the light of Miss Parry's log fire in one flash as she said in a quick low voice Anne did not recognise: "Bluehills—you've been to Bluehills?"

A second later she had withdrawn into herself again—the flash died in those veiled eyes; her voice resumed its colourless timbre. The "clay-shuttered door" closed down with a snap, and Anne was left contemplating the tussore frock with Miss Payne inside it. "Sawest thou not mine oxen, my little pretty boy?" carolled Miss Carey from under the pink lamp-shade. "I wonder what I saw then exactly?" Anne asked herself as she rose automatically to help to hand sandwiches. "Thank you," said Miss Payne; "these tomato ones look very nice."

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

"Lord, behold us, with Thy blessing,  
Once again assembled here" . . .

Anne's eyes, ranging over the grimly resolute faces in Hall on the first morning of the spring term, noted as usual Miss Parry's firmly-set mouth, instinct with professional optimism; Miss Branson's new tweed skirt, kilted so that it looked even shorter than her last year's one; Miss Moss's fresh-air flush, which would last for a week and then succumb to routine; the Head's new brooch, a Christmas offering in thoroughly suitable platinum. But that colourless figure in indeterminate pepper-and-salt skirt, faded monochrome blouse, and badly-fitting shoes—where was it?

Anne caught Miss Parry, who always knew everything as a matter of duty, as she hurried past. "Miss Payne? She's snowed up at Bluehills—can't get here till the line is clear."

"A reprieve," Anne found herself thinking as she collected her books. Her vague compassion for Miss Payne was soon merged in irritation when a portion of the snow-bound reveller's class was ruthlessly imported into her own.

Three mornings later Anne saw the pepper-and-salt skirt in its old place. She craned discreetly forward to catch a glimpse of Miss Payne's face. It was paler, flatter, more shut-in than ever, but Anne fancied there was a gleam of something like triumph in the blue eyes. Perhaps the reprieve had been worth having, after all.

Miss Payne was very pleased to have tea with Miss Sheridan, thank you; and Anne, pouring out from her prized Georgian tea-pot into the broad Willow cups she reserved for *tête-à-tête* meals, cast desperately about for conversational adjuncts to her cakes and ale. The fourth silence—or was it the fifth?—had fallen and deepened as the dusk was deepening out there under the beech tree on the school lawns, when suddenly the guest spoke. "They'll be having tea there now."

"Who will? Where?"

Anne, transfixed, could barely breathe the words. Miss Payne had never—Miss Parry, even, confessed it—been known to initiate a conversational sequence.

"At—at Bluehills. . . . They have it at five o'clock—always."

"What is it like there, Miss Payne?" Anne carefully leaned a little forward and inspected the fire, avoiding her guest's face, now deep in shadow.

"Like? Do you mean at home?"

Anne nodded, watchful.

"Oh, we—we're not much, you know; not what you'd call much. Farmers, my people are. . . . Mother, she's always done everything about the place and managed everyone. Father's getting on now; he's badly bothered with rheumatism in the winter. They—they couldn't very well spare the money I make, you see. We've never been well off, and they've had losses. But I manage to save what I can as well, in case—in case anything should happen to him any time. He's always been ambitious for me—that's why I gave in and said I'd train as a teacher, to please him." Anne leaned back motionless, voiceless. Glimpses



of bare fields, a sweating team, stiff old bones which would neither bend nor bow, and little bright books of War Certificates, flashed across her vision. The monotone went on: "There's an old delft-rack in the kitchen; oak, with willow dishes the

father—to little Rachel: she's my christening-mug . . . and when we have tea the fire looks so pleasant, shining . . ."

Miss Payne suddenly



"Old Matthew Payne spoke seldom, but now and then sped a satiric shaft in the direction of the guest, with a smile that robbed it of its barb."

same as these in it; and a copper warming-pan, and a set of old pewter jugs, five of them, from Big Richard—he was my grand-

wrapped her long arms with a convulsive movement round her knees and, laying her head on them, began quietly to sob,

Anne, wise enough to attempt no consolation, set about fresh tea-making with the energy of despair. "She'd be shocked

buns were, indeed, very nice if you got them fresh.

Remembering with relief that a lecture



"The talk was all of local happenings and farmers' fortunes."

if I offered her a cigarette," she decided, as she stirred the traditional cup of comfort feminine frailty is supposed to crave. Rachel Payne raised a grey ravaged face, which smote Anne's heart with sudden sharp compassion. "The face of a prisoner doing a life-sentence," she phrased it to herself as she drank fresh tea in sympathy. Presently, after recourse to a dubious-coloured handkerchief, her guest ate a slice of cake and agreed that Laurie's Saturday

by Miss Moss in Hall at half-past six was incumbent on both Miss Payne and herself, Anne proposed "tidying" in readiness. They walked in silence across the quadrangle and down the cloistered path in the spring darkness. A silver slip of moon eluded them behind the clock tower. "She seems composed enough now. . . . I won't mention the moon, I think. Better not." Anne, wondering what Bluehills fields looked like by moonlight, roused herself to find

Miss Moss, very calm and competent, scanning her neat notes by the lecture-desk. Her subject was "Women Poets," and to-night, by some infelicitous chance, she had concentrated her nimble and suggestive brain on Emily Brontë. Anne, pursuing her thoughts across the Haworth moors, those solitudes lit up by three flaming souls as with undying torches, was apprehensively conscious of her neighbour's inexpressive stillness. Presently, under the authentic Brontë spell, she forgot Miss Payne altogether. "The nostalgia of Emily Brontë," Miss Moss observed, "seems to me to be summed up in lines from a Scottish poet which some of you may know—

How men that ever have kenned aboot it  
Can live their after lives without it,  
I canna tell, for day and nicht  
It comes unca'd for tae my sicht."

A movement beside her made Anne turn, to find Miss Payne slipping softly to the floor in a dead faint—a retreat as inconspicuous as that of a snail withdrawing from a cabbage leaf.

## II.

MISS PAYNE had actually left Beechcroft some days before Anne awoke to the fact that she was unlikely ever to see her again. A telegram had come for her, Miss Parry said, on the Wednesday. The Head had handed it to her in person, and had sustained a correct professional shock on learning that the mother of Miss Payne had had a stroke. She had then sustained a second completely unprofessional one, which she imparted to Miss Parry over the tumbler of hot milk which the occasion seemed to warrant. "Miss Parry, you will scarcely know what to think; I confess I was quite at a loss. She read the telegram and passed it across to me. 'Mother has had stroke come immediately, Payne,' if my memory serves me, was the trend of it. Well, Miss Parry, believe me, the only thing Miss Payne said was: '*Thank God!*' When she could not even know whether her mother was still—or whether—well, I can only say it was most strange! Her face seemed to light up in such a curious way, almost as though the news had been good! . . . Thank you, yes, I will have just half a glass more, Miss Parry. Strange, indeed!"

On the Friday came a letter to the Head and a note for Anne. Miss Payne was unable to leave her mother, who would never walk again, though she might live for years, the

doctors said. It was a good thing the term was so nearly ended, and no doubt the Head would be able to arrange about her successor in the holidays. Miss Payne hoped that if ever Miss Sheridan were in the neighbourhood of Bluehills, she would pay her a visit at Callands Farm. Would Miss Sheridan remember her kindly to Miss Parry and anyone else who should ask for her?

No one did, and even Miss Parry, though she said "Poor Miss Payne!" twice when Anne gave her the message, seemed relieved of a dubious claim on her professional compassion. In a week Miss Payne was forgotten; in a month she was obliterated. Miss Branson indulged in a knitted frock; it shrank, and there were rumours that Miss Parry had "said something" to her about it. Miss Carëy sang "Linden Lea"; Miss Moss acquired a *fiancé* and Miss Blair a drawl. Miss Lennox declined on henna ("a wash, you know, not a dye") for her incurably depressing hair. The waters of oblivion flowed, and the place of Miss Payne knew her no more.

## III.

"CALLANDS? It is Payne's, ye mean? Tak' the straight road till it turns, cross by the field-path, keeping to the burnside, and ye'll see it straight in front of ye."

Anne swung along in the full sunshine of a September afternoon, twirling her stick and pondering on the impulse that had prompted her to take Miss Payne at her word. "Curiosity, perhaps—perhaps just a whim. I never really liked her; nobody could like anything so tepid, so colourless, so meaningless. I wonder if I'm going to wish I hadn't come? But, after all, it's on my way, more or less, if I want to get to Cairnlaw to-night. That must be the house."

She approached the long, huddled white-washed farmhouse, noting enviously its creeped sides and the generous tawny splashes of wallflower under the windows. Half-way up the uneven flagged path she came to a standstill. Someone was singing. From one of the sunny rooms through the doorway, opening on a broad, cool passage, came snatches of "O' a' the airts the wind can blaw," followed immediately, as the singer's rhythmic labours changed, by "Hey, Johnny Cope, are ye waukin' yet?" Anne rubbed her eyes. Could it be? It must be—Rachel Payne singing! And not crooning in some vague, despondent twi-

light, but singing vigorously in full sunshine. Anne drew back, dubious of her moment. The sounds ceased, and after a pause a figure carrying an empty clothes-basket appeared in the doorway. Tall, confident, her blouse of hawthorn-pink open at the neck, showing a warm tanned throat and challenging lines of body; arms bare to the elbow, tawny near the wrists and white as milk above them; a slender, supple figure, with legs that Miss Branson might have envied, striding under a brown skirt kilted to the knees. "Miss Payne!"

"Miss Sheridan!" Rachel Payne flushed, paled and flushed again as she said incoherently: "So glad! For a moment I thought you'd come to fetch me back. Never mind! So glad! Come in. We're just going to have tea. The clothes? Oh, they can wait."

She led Anne down the wide passage into a kitchen which she recognised at once. The great delft-rack faced her as she entered; both sun and firelight glistened on the copper warming-pan and the five pewter jugs; the broad Willow dishes smiled as good Willow always does; their open, honest surfaces disdained the second-rate.

"My mother—Miss Sheridan." Anne took the long, lean hand in hers—a managing hand, for all it must lie still nowadays—and encountered a glance she respected from shrewd grey eyes which seemed to sum up as they saw.

"Rachel used to speak of you," Mrs. Payne observed; "she said you were one of the thinking kind, Miss Sheridan. They're rare—aye, rare." Anne sat by the window, watching Rachel's swift, accustomed movements as she made the tea and handled the shining silver, with the pleased sense of a child turning over a new picture book. Here was no oft-told tale—Miss Payne, late of Beechcroft—but a new, adventurous page in a chronicle of which Anne did not so much as know the name—positively a romance! Rachel went out to summon her father to tea, and they heard her humming softly as she re-entered. She spoke to someone Anne could not see, and laughed—the careless, jaunty laugh of a young girl.

The dreamlike sensation gained on Anne as they sat at tea. Old Matthew Payne spoke seldom, but now and then sped a satiric shaft in the direction of the guest, with a smile that robbed it of its barb. A gaunt, commanding figure, with a weather-beaten face from which two intensely blue

eyes stared forth—countryman's eyes, skilled in divination of wind and weather, and holding a wisdom beyond either.

The talk was all of local happenings and farmers' fortunes; of who had the best market prospects, and what Thomson of Boarlaws was thinking of—wanting another of these new tractors already, when it was well known he'd not yet paid for the first; of last Sunday's sermon and how old Mr. McRait was failing fast; of seed-time and harvest and the green hope of man.

Beechcroft! There wasn't such a place, Anne told herself. Rachel was recounting the ghost-story of Bluehills; her eyes flashed, her flush deepened to a warm rose as she kindled to the tale. "And *whuff*—there they were in their sarks, minister and elders and all, and the deils flee-fleein' awa' like puffs of smoke, and forked lightning playing hide-and-seek in the trees. And the blasted thorn, ye can see that on the Laurieston road this very night, if ye go there alone, alone in the dark o' the moon!"

Later Rachel took her across the fields to the station, striding beside her in the dusk with firm, purposeful steps. They passed milkers returning from the upper pastures, and for each she had a greeting, now humorous, now provocative, now guarded, with a hint of challenge.

A chance intonation in the "'Night, Rachel," of a square-set young farmer who passed them made Anne ask tentatively: "Who is that?"

"That? That's Sam Erskine of Balmeadowside. He's after me," Rachel informed her laconically.

"Oh! And—you are engaged, then?"

"No, not yet. How can I, with mother as she is?" Rachel helped Anne's urban frailty over a barbed-wire entanglement with careful condescension. "I'm not saying in a few years' time I'll not take him. But while mother's here, and I've everything to do, Sam will have to wait."

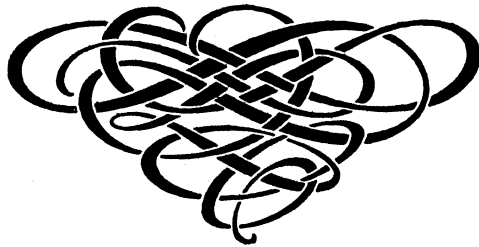
"Oh," said Anne again. She had an insane impulse to add, "It's very nice, I'm sure." Somehow the evening's experiences had made her feel as if she were the silent, colourless, tussore-frock, pepper-and-salt negation that had been Miss Payne, while this vivid, confident, challenging stranger, who talked and laughed and sang—what was she? "Rachel Payne, or, The Case is Altered"; "Vice-Versa—Beechcroft v. Bluehills"—headlines formed themselves in her puzzling brain. At the station Rachel procured her ticket, admonished

her as to changing at Leadstones, and warned her of the treacherous night air. The broad-shouldered station-master greeted them with respect. "Any friend of Rachel's is welcome at Bluehills, I'm sure," he observed, wringing Anne's hand with resolution. "Aye, it's as weel we have her back now for good; Rachel keeps us a' in order."

"It is—for good, isn't it?" Anne spoke on a sudden impulse as they stood side by side awaiting the train. "You're—happy here, Miss Payne?" She waited nervously, unsure of her ground.

"Happy?" Rachel laughed, then flung an arm upwards in a queer gesture of

capture, of embrace. The train's oncoming rush took them unawares; Anne was hustled into a carriage. The station-master shouted in the sonorous triumph of his moment: "*Bluehills! Bluehills! Bluehills!*" To Anne, peering out into the friendly country dusk, it seemed that Rachel Payne there on the platform, her body pulsing with fulfilment, her eyes dark, assured of their secret freedom, loomed suddenly tall as a willow, fragrant as a hawthorn hedge—alive, perhaps, in their way, not in Anne's. She fancied that a faint triumphant echo from that receding figure followed the wheels: "*Bluehills! Bluehills!*"



## THE BRAVE HEART.

**C**AST from thee, like a garment shed,  
Thy grief. Behold the rocky wall,  
A bulwark to the river-bed,  
The noisy waterfall.

No sorrow hath it and no hate,  
Feeling the water's angry will  
Borne by the swift sky-tumbled spate  
Over its graven sill.

The water hath a healing grace  
To bring the stone. So be thou wrought  
Till there shall blossom on thy face  
The flower of sweet thought,

As on the torrent's wall are left,  
Fed by its dewy fume, the fair  
Moss for the slab or, in a cleft,  
Hart's tongue and maidenhair.

WILFRID THORLEY.

# THE INVASION

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

"A FORTNIGHT ago I thought I should die of *ennui* in this place, but now——"

"Now what, child?"

"Dear Madame Bovet, I did not know that you were in the room."

"The door being open," said Madame Bovet, "I took the liberty of entering."

"Please, please, do not be sarcastic—anything but that!"

"I was never sarcastic in my life, Cécile. My poor Anatole was sometimes a little sharp—he had a great command of language—but never, you understand, to me."

"No, no—of course, never to you. Who could possibly be annoyed with you?"

Madame Bovet, as she seated herself with an air of resignation in a comfortable chair with a foot-rest, glanced at Cécile almost suspiciously.

"Let me suggest to you," she said, "that it is a bad habit to talk to oneself. But I see the window is open. Perhaps you were discussing *ennui* with someone in the street." The girl turned from the window by which she had been standing, crossed over to Madame Bovet and kissed her.

"There is no one there to speak to. And, anyway, you are a dear!" The inconsequence of this last remark did not appear to strike Madame Bovet; she returned the caress, then smoothed her hair, folded her hands in her lap, and smiled benignly.

"Well, well!" she said. "And why, a fortnight ago, did you imagine you would die of *ennui* in Giranden?"

"Because then I did not know Giranden."

"And you think you know it now, after a fortnight's experience? That is hardly complimentary to Giranden. I assure you that we are not all so simple as we appear to be."

"Simple? No! Boutel, the grocer, is not simple, and as for Picard, the apothecary, he looks out from his shop door like an old alchemist from his den. He must be very wise. I like Giranden because nothing ever seems to happen—or only little things—

and the little things are so interesting. And then that château on the hill, looking down on it all!"

"The Château de Giranden is unique," said Madame Bovet. "You will find out all about it in the guide-book, which declares it to be one of the finest feudal relics in Europe. We Luxembourgers are proud of it."

"I have read what the guide-book says, but that does not satisfy me. The Château de Giranden cannot be explained by a guide-book. Yet I never heard of it before I came here."

"They do not know everything in Brussels."

"No, not everything," Cécile said, returning to the window. "Shall I tell you what I can see?"

"Yes, child, if it will please you. But do not lean too far out; one must never attract attention in Giranden."

One side of Madame Bovet's house, which was the largest in the village, faced directly on the main street. The other side, which was the real front, looked across a well-ordered garden to the slope of a wooded hill. At present Cécile Declès was more interested in the street side than in the garden side of the house. Her voice came from the window.

"I see an old woman at the door of a *café*, scratching her nose."

"That is Madame Vibart; she is always at the door scratching her nose when there are no customers to serve inside."

"I see an old man hobbling along with a basket of vegetables on his back."

"That is Diekel, no Luxemburger, from across the frontier. They say he steals the vegetables and charges high prices for them. But one does not believe all one hears."

"I see a brown dog asleep outside the tobacconist's on the other side of the bridge."

"Morin's dog. He is always asleep."

"That is all, except the street and the cottages. The heat shimmers above the

cobble-stones. The road mounts up and up, then seems to stop. On the right, up in the sky, is the Château de Giranden. There are two little clouds over it, like wings. . . . Yes, this is a wonderful place, this Giranden. What do the people do?"

"Work in the fields and woods and at the big sawmill. Then there are the cement works up the valley—a good many are employed there. Giranden is empty of men at this hour of the day."

As Cécile was about to leave the window, a strange, pattering sound, accompanied by groans and an occasional cry, reached her ears. She looked out again.

"Ah, now there is indeed something to see! A herd of pigs is crossing the bridge. Immense pigs! They wish to rest, poor things, but a man with a long stick urges them on."

"A tall man with a black beard?" Madame Bovet asked.

"Yes."

"That is Mouche."

"And who is Mouche?"

"One of Monsieur de Genlis' men."

"Who is Monsieur de Genlis?"

"The most important person in Giranden."

"Then he must be very important indeed," said Cécile.

"He is, I assure you. Now, *he*, if he would only speak, could tell you more about the Château de Giranden than all the guide-books." As the protesting herd of swine passed the house, raising a cloud of dust, Cécile closed the window.

"How is that?" she asked.

"Because he is a descendant of the great nobles to whom the château once belonged."

"Why will he not speak?" Madame Bovet shrugged her shoulders.

"He is a strange man," she said. "He prefers to be known only as a farmer. He owns much land, and cultivates it to admiration, and it is said that his pigs are the finest in the Grand Duchy."

"He thinks more of his pigs than of his pedigree?"

"Unquestionably," said Madame Bovet.

"I should like to meet this curious Monsieur de Genlis."

"You shall, child. Next week my brother is coming for a couple of days. He and Monsieur de Genlis are acquainted. We will have a little dinner-party."

"Delightful!" said Cécile. "And now, while you take your nap, I will go up to the château. I have wonderful dreams up there."

"I am not sure," Madame Bovet said, "that wonderful dreams are good for you. Nor am I sure that you should go up there alone."

"I have been there alone before. Yesterday morning, for example, before you were out of bed."

"Indeed!" said Madame Bovet. "Why did you not tell me that before?"

"Because it was an adventure, and one likes to keep adventures to oneself for a time."

Madame Bovet smiled indulgently. The one adventure of her life had been her marriage, and the lamented Anatole had not been romantic. She herself would not have dared, at Cécile's age, to go out alone before breakfast. A sudden thought struck her.

"At that hour," she said, "the custodian would not be there, and the gate would be locked."

"He was not there."

"Then how——"

"Did I manage to reach the château? I climbed over the gate. It was quite easy."

Madame Bovet gazed at the girl in amazement, perhaps with admiration. "Easy, no doubt, for you are young. But my dear child, in broad daylight, with the eyes of Giranden all round you! Sacred Heaven!"

"I assure you there were no eyes to see."

"Promise me," Madame Bovet said earnestly, "that you will never do it again. I do not desire to restrict your freedom, but there must be limits which your own good sense and breeding should suggest."

"I promise," Cécile said. "And now go to sleep." She kissed Madame Bovet again, ran upstairs for a hat, and was walking briskly up the street before the dust raised by the pigs had resettled.

As a matter of fact, the good folks of Giranden are not particularly curious, or, at any rate, they manage to disguise their curiosity more successfully than the villagers of Belgium or France. They go their own way, industrious and self-centred, and do not trouble their heads overmuch about strangers, though it must be said to their credit that they will go out of their way to help any casual sojourner.

Cécile, having reached the top of the street, turned to the right up a rough track which led to the gate of her exploit. It was no more than an ordinary field gate opening on to the steep acclivity which was crowned



by the château. Just inside the gate was a kind of box-stall, where the custodian—the designation was too imposing for his duties—sold local guide-books and picture postcards. No charge was made for admission to the château.

The outer walls of the immense stronghold were ruinous, but the central structure was almost intact. This contained the banqueting hall, chapel, various smaller chambers, and, in a kind of semi-basement, the great Hall of the Twelve Knights. In this were twelve stone columns, which bore the main weight of the upper edifice. Into this hall, tradition said, the Knights of St. James of Giranden, never exceeding twelve

memory of the last few months was confused. Her mother, for many years a hopeless invalid, had slipped out of a life that had been little better than a living death. Within a few weeks her father, a lawyer, had died in harness, with a pen in his hand. To Cécile, his only child, he left—in the hands of trustees—all that he possessed. The will had been made a few days after the death of his wife. Madame Bovet was appointed Cécile's guardian.

She had heard of Madame Bovet, but had never seen her until, in response to an affectionate and earnest letter from that lady, she found herself in Giranden. At first, as Madame Bovet had overheard her say,



“Better to become a farmer amongst farmers, a clown amongst clowns, than be sneered at as a descendant of nobles with mud on his boots.”

in number, used to ride, each tethering his horse to a particular pillar and laying his armour at its base.

Cécile skirted the outer wall and, standing in the shadow of the huge pile, gazed up the river valley. It was deeply wooded, and the fresh greenery of early June thrilled under the sun. She sighed, but was unconscious of the sigh. This new world!

She had been transplanted from a vivid capital city to the natural soil of Giranden—the home of roses, quietness, Madame Bovet, and pigs; Monsieur de Genlis' pigs were clearly part of the picture. Her

she thought that she would die of *ennui*. Madame Bovet was immensely kind, but she appeared always to be worshipping at a shrine which could have little interest for Cécile—the shrine of the late Anatole Bovet, one time general merchant of the city of Luxemburgh. Why she had been consigned to Madame Bovet's guardianship Cécile did not know.

There was sorrow in her mood for the parents she had lost, and also—for surely youth is its own best comforter—a certain restless happiness in the mere consciousness of tingling vitality and a growing appreciation



of this new world. And somehow the Château de Giranden was an essential part of it; it suggested infinite romance, the kind of vague romance which is luxuriously impersonal. Romance, and M. de Genlis' pigs! She laughed softly.

To the right, beyond the encircling wall where the hill sloped more gently to the river, lay cultivated fields and grass meadows. About a hundred yards from the river bank stood a white house, surrounded by a garden that was ablaze with roses. Just beyond the wall, with a gate that gave immediately on to ground of the château, was a large enclosure, occupied by a queuing company of pigs. In their midst Cécile recognised the tall figure of Mouche with his long stick. Facing him stood a shorter figure, energetically gesticulating. Cécile fancied that she could hear an angry voice. Was that M. de Genlis?

After a time she turned from the green and sunny world to the gloom of the château. Passing under a low archway, she crossed an inner court to another and larger archway in the main building. A sloping descent of worn granite brought her into the Hall of the Twelve Knights. There a perpetual twilight reigned, a curious twilight which seemed to owe nothing to the outer day. For a moment she stood still in the profound silence, almost afraid. As she crossed the hall to a corresponding archway on the farther side, she heard a voice.

"Walk carefully here, please. Keep a little to the right." She stopped short, startled, breathing quickly. At the same moment she became aware of a kneeling figure a few feet ahead. The face, that of a young man, was turned towards her. He rose.

"I am afraid I frightened you. But you will see the reason for my warning if you come a little nearer. Look!" He pointed downwards. She advanced a pace or two and saw a circular opening in the floor, about six feet across—a mouth of blackness. "This," said the young man, "is the oubliette. It is, of course, usually covered, but I have permission to make what explorations I like in the château."

"The oubliette?"

"Yes—an underground dungeon, without light and with little air."

"Horrible!"

"I agree. We are, perhaps, more civilised nowadays, but I am not sure. I intend to go down there soon."

"Why? You might find——"

"Something dreadful? I think not. Would you like to see?"

She advanced to the edge of the opening, and he switched on an electric torch, which he lowered into the oubliette by a cord. The descending light revealed the sides of what seemed to be an immense well, some sixty feet deep. The stone sides were dry, but at the bottom there appeared to be a bed of slime. Cécile shuddered.

"Were living men put down there?" she asked.

"Yes. Sometimes they remained there for months, even years; and sometimes, it is said, they were forgotten."

"And died down there, alone, starving, in the dark?"

"I am afraid so."

"Then I shall never like the Château de Giranden any more. I shall hate it."

The young man smiled. "But you doubtless read and enjoy books with worse things than that in them."

"Oh, that is different."

"No doubt." He covered the mouth of the oubliette with two semicircular stone slabs, which he had placed on rollers, and stood up.

"Thank you, monsieur, for your kindness," said Cécile. "I must now hurry back to the village."

"You are staying in Giranden, mademoiselle?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Then I was not mistaken."

"In what way?"

"I saw you coming up here early yesterday morning."

Cécile thought of the gate-climbing and flushed. She felt annoyed with this self-possessed young man. "It is true that I was here yesterday morning," she said, turning away.

"I know a great deal about the Château de Giranden," he said musingly.

"As much as M. de Genlis?" The question was out before she knew it.

"Quite as much, perhaps more," he said, smiling. At that Cécile hurried away. For a moment she was almost blinded by the sun's glare without, and stood bewildered. Then she saw Mouche alone. His back was towards her, and he was gazing after the retreating figure of the gesticulating gentleman, who was striding towards the white house.

Madame Bovet had only just awakened from her nap. Cécile had been away for precisely an hour, though it seemed much

longer. At first she thought she would say nothing to Madame Bovet about her encounter with the stranger at the château, but the simple benevolence and kindness of her guardian made any deceit, even the most innocent, appear almost criminal. So Cécile told the story.

"Was this young explorer of the oubliette tall, rather pale, and—handsome?" she asked.

"Tall and pale, yes. As to handsome—there is little light in the Hall of the Twelve Knights."

"Well," said Madame Bovet, "he is handsome if, as I conjecture, this young man was Honoré de Genlis."

"De Genlis!"

"The son of the M. de Genlis of whom I spoke."

"Is the white house by the river M. de Genlis'?"

"Yes. How did you guess that?"

"I saw Mouche amongst the pigs in an enclosure. A gentleman, who appeared to be angry, was talking to him."

"M. de Genlis, no doubt. He is a man of hot temper, but at the same time just and generous. Honoré takes but little interest in the farm. He is always reading, or poking about the château. Some day he will write a book about it that nobody will read."

"I shall read it," Cécile said, "even though I told him that I should take no more interest in the château after seeing that wicked oubliette."

"You should beware of permitting strangers to address you," Madame Bovet said, "though in this case, perhaps——"

"In this case it could not be helped. He saved me from a terrible accident." As she spoke it seemed to Cécile that an accident had, in fact, been imminent.

"Of course you expressed your obligation?"

"I don't remember."

"Naturally you were terribly alarmed, poor child. For myself, I dislike all ruins, particularly old ones. . . . I will now write that invitation to M. de Genlis, and include in it his son."

"Did you not intend to invite him?"

"It had not occurred to me. Honoré keeps so much to himself that one forgets him."

"Please, dear Madame Bovet, do not ask him on my account."

"It is my duty, child, to thank him personally for saving your life," said Madame

Bovet. "My poor Anatole was always most careful about such courtesies."

That night Cécile dreamed that she was heroically rescued from the oubliette by an armoured warrior who descended by means of an incredibly slight rope. She was not in the least frightened. The Hall of the Twelve Knights was blazing with innumerable torches, but neither man nor horse was to be seen save the one superb steed of her deliverer. As he swung her to the crupper of the saddle she awoke. Day was already bright over Giranden; she heard the songs of birds, the murmur of the river, the rustle of leaves. This new world—yes, it was good, still with the bloom on it, as it were, and sweet with a virginal freshness. It was five o'clock. She sighed contentedly and slept again.

## II.

MADAME BOVET's invitation was accepted; five days remained before the arrival of M. Victor Pelletier, Madame Bovet's brother from Luxemburgh, and the dinner-party. Madame Bovet at once concentrated her mind on preparations for the entertainment of such important guests. She consulted Cécile, who knew little about domestic affairs, and dismissed her tentative suggestions with a smile and "Dear child, your culinary education has been neglected. Even in Brussels they do not know everything about kitchen matters. We Luxemburgers have dishes of our own." Cécile, therefore, was left more than ever to herself.

For two days she contemplated the Château de Giranden from below; on the third—in spite of the disquieting matter of the oubliette—she once again mounted the hill. She had, naturally, thought a good deal about Honoré de Genlis, and had associated him with the more romantic aspect of the château. No doubt he would write a wonderful book.

No pigs were visible in the enclosure, and, being as ignorant of those creatures as of kitchen affairs, she imagined that Mouche might have taken them out for exercise. She crossed the courtyard and entered the Hall of the Twelve Knights. In the always chilly twilight of the place she saw a tall figure standing at the rim of the open oubliette. It was Mouche, holding a rope between his hands. Cécile shivered and stood still. Then she heard a voice, apparently proceeding from the bowels of the earth, but she could not catch the words. Mouche began to pull on the rope. At this moment Cécile sneezed. Mouche

dropped the rope with a startled cry, and Cécile darted forward just in time to catch the end of it as it was slipping towards the edge of the oubliette.

"Fool!" She could hear the voice from below clearly enough now. "What has happened? Haul at once!"

Mouche scowled at Cécile, took the rope from her and growled over the abyss: "I was startled, monsieur. One of those prowling visitors!" He hauled vigorously, and presently the head and shoulders of Honoré de Genlis emerged. Then he got his elbows and hands on the edge of the oubliette and levered himself out. He was caked with slimy mud.

"What the devil——" he began.

Mouche turned to Cécile. "This lady——"

"It was not his fault," Cécile said. "I sneezed—I could not help it."

"You, mademoiselle!" Honoré bowed and laughed. "So, after all, you are still interested in the château?"

"Immensely," she admitted.

Mouche coiled up the rope, slung it over his arm, and said: "Have I your permission to go, monsieur?"

"Go, by all means, and in future have more courage." The man departed, tramping heavily and muttering to himself.

"A morose fellow," Honoré said.

"Did you make any discoveries down there, monsieur?"

"Only slime, and an iron ring in the wall to which, no doubt, prisoners were chained."

"Chains, darkness, no air! What cruel wickedness!"

"Yes. And yet the men who did these things had noble virtues. However, let us dismiss a subject that does not please you. . . . You are Mademoiselle Declès, the guest of Madame Bovet?"

"That is true. And you are M. Honoré de Genlis?"

"That also is true. We shall not be strangers when we meet at Madame Bovet's table. To tell you the truth, I should probably have declined the invitation if it had not been for you."

The extreme frankness of this took the girl a little aback, but it was obviously so unpremeditated and sincere that it did not displease her. "I have no learning, no gifts, monsieur, to appeal to your taste and knowledge. I am a person whose limitations are soon discovered."

"Your limitations, mademoiselle, are nothing to mine. I am merely a student. I have no knowledge of the world."

"And you imagine that I have?"

"So I should judge."

"Madame Bovet would not agree with you," she said, laughing. "And now would it not be as well for you to change those dreadful clothes? An oubliette cold might be fatal!"

Honoré took the suggestion as a command—he was not lacking in adroitness—and left her after replacing the stone slabs. Cécile returned to Madame Bovet's without once glancing back at the château.

M. Victor Pelletier arrived on the appointed day. He was a short, paunchy man, slow of speech, self-satisfied, and good-natured. By profession he was a brewer, and a prosperous one. He treated Madame Bovet with a kind of complacent condescension. Cécile he took to at once; he was almost deferential. Was she not a beauty and an heiress?

"It is strange," he said to her confidentially, "that my good sister should make herself a martyr to the memory of Anatole. I assure you that he was not altogether admirable. As a husband he was difficult—easily offended, sharp of tongue, strict as a schoolmaster. But women, mademoiselle, remember only the good. It is wonderful!"

This information did not surprise the girl—she had heard her father speak of Anatole Bovet—but she did not like M. Pelletier any the better for communicating it.

The dinner, from the culinary point of view, was a success. As a social occasion, however, it was a little uneven. To begin with, M. de Genlis was evidently surprised to find that his son and Cécile were already acquainted, for Honoré, by reason of a certain shyness, had not been so frank with him as Cécile had been with Madame Bovet. Moreover, M. de Genlis was bubbling with anger against Mouche. When Cécile tried, very delicately, to draw him on his connection with the ancient lords of the Château de Giranden, his annoyance found voice.

"My dear mademoiselle," he cried, "are you also, like my son, bitten by this gadfly of romance? I tell you that my ancestors of the Château de Giranden—happily my descent is only through a female line—were a set of rogues and robbers. They pillaged and murdered. Their gold had blood on it. They stole women as they stole cattle."

"But surely all the stories about the age of chivalry are not false?"

"Here and there, no doubt, there was

an honest man and a gentleman in the black flock. That is why so much is made of any decent action."

"Then you consider, monsieur," Pelletier ventured to ask, "that there is more real chivalry in our time than then?"

"I have no doubt about it," M. de Genlis said irritably. "We are not so picturesque now, but we are kinder. We do not, for example, hang impudent or incapable servants, though some of them deserve it. That Mouche—" He paused and looked fiercely at poor Pelletier.

"Come, come, even Mouche has good points," Honoré said.

"Then, my son, I have failed to discover them, and in any case I should not value your opinion in such a matter. No, I have done with Mouche; I shall give him notice to-morrow." Then, addressing the table at large, M. de Genlis continued:

"I make no pretensions, I am merely a farmer, and in particular a rearer of pigs. Pigs are misunderstood. They may not be beautiful, but even on that point there may be two opinions: for what is beauty? They require careful and kind treatment. The other day Mouche, contrary to my express orders, overdrove some valuable animals. Two of them are still lame. Why did he do this? Because he was himself tired and wished to guzzle in a wretched *café*. It is infamous, infamous! If he had only apologised properly—but no! He made excuses. I have done with Mouche!" Having delivered himself of this speech, M. de Genlis glanced at his astonished auditors, became suddenly abashed, hastily swallowed a glass of wine, and relapsed into gloomy silence. Nor for the remainder of the evening did he recover.

During the next few days the Château de Giranden had a strange fascination for Cécile and Honoré, and particularly the Hall of the Twelve Knights. Neither spoke of M. de Genlis' outburst concerning Mouche, and Honoré left the *oubliette* to its own unamiable darkness and solitude. What the pair talked about is, indeed, of little consequence, but the result of it all was. Honoré fell deeply in love, and, for a time, ceased to take any interest in antiquity. As for Cécile, her eyes appeared to become brighter and brighter. One afternoon he said abruptly—

"I shall speak to Madame Bovet at once, Cécile. But first I must have a word with my father."

"About what?" she asked.

"You, little one!" He left her alone in the Hall of the Twelve Knights, whose twilight seemed suddenly to be suffused with gold.

M. de Genlis was watching his beehives when Honoré descended upon him with his startling announcement. He listened with his head slightly on one side, as though he wished to receive the sharp murmur of the bees with one ear while the other was taking in Honoré's eager declaration. He did not speak until the young man had finished. Then he said—

"So that is what is the matter! Let us consider it calmly. You, a de Genlis, living in the shadow of the ancestral walls of the Château de Giranden, wish to propose for the hand of the daughter of a Brussels attorney! Do you not see that it is impossible?"

For a moment Honoré was silent from sheer amazement. "But you always made light of our ancestry—even pretended to despise it. It was I who took pride in it."

"*Pretended* to despise it—yes. And why? Because the people of Giranden to-day are not capable of understanding such pride, and why should I make a fool of myself for their benefit? Better to become a farmer amongst farmers, a clown amongst clowns, than be sneered at as a descendant of nobles with mud on his boots. Do you suppose that if I had not had the pride of the devil I should have allowed you to spend your time making a history of the château?"

"You are unjust to the people. They would not have sneered."

"I knew them too well to give them the chance. . . . So you see, my dear Honoré, how impossible this affair is."

"I see no impossibility. Pride that would destroy happiness is madness."

"There are other women in the world," said de Genlis.

"But not for me. At any rate, I shall speak to Madame Bovet at once."

"Without my consent, be sure that she will not give hers. Do not be precipitate, my son."

"But I undertook to see her at once."

"In that case you must keep your promise."

The young man moved away a pace or two and then returned. "If you had not deceived me as well as the others," he said, "perhaps— But I think nothing could have prevented it. I am grateful to you for showing so little anger."

"I reserve that for Mouche," said M. de

Genlis. "He goes on Saturday. No, no, I am not angry with you, my son, but I can be firm without that."

Honoré's interview with Madame Bovet was brief and somewhat painful. She broke down completely, and declared that nothing, not even M. de Genlis himself, should stand

M. Declès to place his only child under her care. Such references as the good lady made to the late Anatole were almost slighting, and Honoré left her with the conviction that though she was undoubtedly a woman of excellent heart, her devotion to the memory of the Luxembourg merchant



"A trampling in the outer court, a slithering down the incline, and then pigs, and again pigs!"

between Cécile and happiness. She desired the child's happiness more than anything in the world. Then, from a wave of half-hysterical reminiscence, Honoré gathered that at one time, in her youth, Madame Bovet had given her heart to Cécile's father, but adverse circumstances had driven them apart. It was the old affection that induced

was in the nature of a pious fraud. Cécile he did not see. As he returned, agitated but not depressed, to the white house, it struck him as curious that both Madame Bovet and his father should have striven so sedulously, and so successfully, to deceive their little world. But of what use was such deceit, such success, he asked himself with



They streamed into the Hall of the Twelve Knights as if it were their natural home."

the entire sincerity which, perhaps, is only possible to first love.

The account of the interview with Madame Bovet that Honoré gave to M. de Genlis was brief; in effect, she was favourable to his suit. M. de Genlis nodded and smiled.

"It is a great relief to me," he said, "that

Mouche is going. Would you like the job of herding pigs, Honoré?"

"I would not object, provided they are the aristocracy of pigs."

"That, of course, is taken for granted."

On the following afternoon the lovers met in the Hall of the Twelve Knights. Cécile was jubilant; Madame Bovet had

been most kind and sympathetic; any difficulties could easily be overcome. What did anything matter so long as they loved each other? Nothing, Honoré agreed. But if M. de Genlis remained obdurate. . . . He dismissed that possibility. The two seniors (nearly always troublesome to young blood) must be given time. Not too much, however—certainly not too much. The heroic mood seemed to ooze out of every stone in the Hall of the Twelve Knights.

They met there again on Saturday, at about the same hour. There had been no communication of any kind between Madame Bovet and M. de Genlis. Madame Bovet, Cécile said, seemed always to be waiting for a knock that never came, and M. de Genlis, Honoré had to admit, appeared to have dismissed the matter from his mind—much more easily than he had dismissed Mouche. It was a cloudy afternoon, with ominous threats of a thunderstorm. The west was piled high with leaden clouds, whose livid edges turned and twisted like undulating snakes, ready to attack each other. Of this outside aspect the absorbed pair were unconscious. They were not aware that the twilight of the Hall had deepened. A low and distant growl crept into the Hall by stealth.

"Did you hear that?" Cécile asked. "What was it?"

"Thunder, or perhaps it is only Mouche, grumbling and groaning. Ah, there is the lightning! Mouche could not produce that!" Cécile was not frightened, but she thought it well to take Honoré's hand. They leant against one of the columns as though they were chained together there happily for ever. Moments became an eternity. And yet a thunderstorm is commonplace enough—just a noisy joke of the sun!

A sudden pattering, not of rain, but of scurrying feet. A confused sound of wails and sighs. A trampling in the outer court, a slithering down the incline, and then pigs, and again pigs! They streamed into the Hall of the Twelve Knights as if it were their natural home.

Honoré released Cécile's hand and laughed joyously.

"Are these indeed my father's pigs," he said, "or am I dreaming? Pigs in the Hall of the Twelve Knights! The world is

coming to an end! But not for us, little one. . . . Head them off, head them off!"

"They are sniffing round my feet. Ugh!"

"But you are not Circe, and these pigs are not men transformed. Kick them, drive them this way."

"I cannot stir a finger," Cécile said. "As to kicking, I would kick——"

"Me, probably, mademoiselle. These pigs, that Mouche—a thousand curses on him—that can I say? . . . Clear them out, my son. Let them go home to their sties or to the devil." The speaker was M. de Genlis. He stood close to Cécile in an attitude of dejected apology.

"I did not recognise your voice, monsieur, and yet it is like Honoré's. Have the wonderful pigs gone?"

"As I said to my son, the pigs may go to the devil. . . . That Mouche, that abominable Mouche, left all the gates open. He left my service at noon to-day, and this is his revenge. I suspect he laid a bait for them up here. . . . Ah, you have returned, Honoré."

"Yes, I am here. The pigs have gone home. Even pigs must have adventures."

"Yes, yes. I would deny nothing in reason, even to pigs. But that Mouche—I would hang him! And that oubliette, that would be good for Mouche." M. de Genlis paused for a moment. Then he said, with extreme gravity: "The Hall of the Twelve Knights has been invaded by pigs—my pigs."

"The aristocracy of pigs," said Honoré.

"Of pigs—yes." Again M. de Genlis paused. He looked from Cécile to Honoré in the strange twilight of the Hall of the Twelve Knights and felt himself in entire sympathy with them. Mouche, he saw in a flash of happy inspiration, had given him the chance to climb down. He proceeded: "After all, they are only the aristocrats of the *bourgeoisie*. The Hall of the Twelve Knights is no longer sacred, except, perhaps, to you two foolish persons. I salute you, mademoiselle. I will do myself the honour to wait upon Madame Bovet to-morrow. . . ."

Even pigs can make romance, though Madame Bovet never liked them, alive or dead. The venerated Anatole had always detested pig. A strange aberration in a Luxemburger.





"‘Sir Charles is not at home.’ The young lady sighed. ‘Oh, dear! And I’ve come such a long way to see him. Do you know when he’ll be in?’"

# THE FRUITFUL VISIT

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

AT the seaward end of a little stone jetty a gentleman of quality and substance leaned upon his stick and held one-sided converse with a sea-gull. "Gull," said the gentleman, "I am bored."

The sea-gull received the information with complete indifference.

"This place," pursued the gentleman, "bores me. It has never bored me before, but it certainly bores me now. A symptom of approaching old age, I dare say."

The sea-gull was not interested in the approach of the gentleman's old age.

"The fact that I am reduced to talking

to sea-gulls," observed the gentleman, "shows how bored I am. I shall go home to-day, gull."

The sea-gull did not care.

"It is thoughtful of you," said the gentleman, "to remind me that the flat is shut up, and that Bowles and Mrs. Bowles are both away. There will be no one, as you so kindly point out, to look after me. But I think I shall enjoy looking after myself for a change, gull."

The sea-gull cried aloud with a hoarse and scornful voice, rose grandly into the air, and flapped out to sea.

"Must you go?" said the gentleman.



"Well, good-bye." He smiled, sighed, and turned shoreward. "Yes," he said, "this place seems to have lost its charm. I am not used to boredom, and I dislike it. It *must* be old age," But it was not old age, nor was it boredom, by which the gentleman was afflicted; it was merely loneliness.

So, in the course of an hour or so, a great grey car slid away from the door of the little inn upon the quay. Sir Charles Verity—for such was the name of the gentleman who thought that he was bored—sat at the wheel, and the innkeeper bade him farewell respectfully, but with genuine regret. Each autumn for the past fifteen years Sir Charles had come to the little inn upon the quay, seeking solitude and sea-fishing and simplicity, and never before had he known boredom or curtailed his holiday on that account. Wherefore the innkeeper bade him farewell with genuine regret, fearing that the present boredom of his guest might react unfavourably upon his own future income. For fifteen years Sir Charles had been as good as an annuity to the little inn upon the quay.

Through the bright afternoon Sir Charles drove the great grey car Londonwards. A short, rotund, moon-faced gentleman was this fugitive from boredom, whose sixty years lay lightly upon him. A gentleman whose red hair was touched with grey, and whose perfectly commonplace appearance held no hint of his great possessions, his age-old name, or the respect in which he was held by his fellows. A gentleman whose word was better than another man's bond, and whose wishes were as the laws of the Medes and Persians, as various disgruntled people—and notably his own son John—had from time to time discovered. Yet withal a gentleman of a whimsical humour, as the sea-gull could have testified.

Between the little inn upon the quay and Upper Grosvenor Street lie seventy good miles, which to the great grey car was a matter of no importance. The afternoon was not far advanced when Sir Charles, carrying his suit-case, came down Upper Grosvenor Street from the garage, opened his street-door, climbed the stairs to his flat, admitted himself, set down the suit-case and looked about him.

The flat lay very still and lifeless under its holland dust-sheets, and Sir Charles nodded in a satisfied way.

"Look after myself for a little," said Sir Charles. "Do me good. Bowles will

have a heart-attack when he finds me here. Do *him* good." With that he marched to the bathroom, for no man may travel seventy good miles at high speed in an open car and remain unsmirched.

His ablutions were but half accomplished when the door-bell rang, suddenly and imperatively.

"Confound it!" said Sir Charles, continuing to sponge his head. "Let them ring!"

The bell spoke again, even more imperatively. Sir Charles cursed peevishly, caught up a towel and applied it with vigour; then—coatless, waistcoatless, collarless, his hair in confusion, his shirt-sleeves rolled above his elbows—he marched angrily down the hall and flung open the door.

Upon the landing stood two persons—a young lady and a small boy. The young lady was tall and slim and of a notable comeliness, having large grey eyes and much fair hair and very admirable features; her clothes, while in no way remarkable, indicated a perfect taste and a bank account to match. The small boy, whose years were possibly six, was sturdy and black-haired and engagingly solemn of countenance. Sir Charles, eyeing the pair somewhat blankly, found himself wishing for a collar.

"Is Sir Charles Verity at home?" asked the young lady, and her voice was everything that a voice should be.

Sir Charles did not immediately reply. These persons were unknown to him, and he was not in the mood to entertain strangers. Moreover, past experience warned him that this female had probably called to solicit a favour or a subscription, neither of which he felt prepared to supply. Therefore he shook his head.

"Sir Charles," he answered, "is not at home!"

The young lady sighed. "Oh, dear! And I've come such a long way to see him. Do you know when he'll be in?"

Now, it was said of Sir Charles—crossly by some and amusedly by others—that you never knew what he would do next. Even as the colour of his hair and the jut of his jaw betokened an explosive temper, so the little lines about his eyes and mouth hinted at a sense of humour which was apt to manifest itself in strange and often reprehensible ways. Which may help to explain, if not to excuse, his conduct on the present occasion.

"Sir Charles," he replied gravely, "went away last week, madam. He is not expected

to return till Tuesday next. But if you care to leave a message——”

“No,” said the young lady decidedly, “I couldn’t do that.” She tapped her foot upon the ground and stared thoughtfully at him. “Are you his—his butler?” she demanded suddenly.

Sir Charles bowed slightly. “I look after Sir Charles, madam,” said he.

The young lady hesitated for a moment, and then awarded him a smile so dazzling that he nearly gasped.

“It sounds dreadful impertinence, I know,” she said, “but—do you think you could give me a cup of tea? You see, we’ve come a long way, and David’s rather tired.”

Sir Charles started. His assumption of the rôle of valet to himself had been designed merely to drive these people from his door; he had not anticipated that it would have an opposite effect. His first impulse was to refuse, but an instant’s reflection stayed him from so discourteous a step. After all, one *couldn’t* very well refuse. Bowles—an impressionable man of hospitable tendencies—would infallibly have provided tea; Sir Charles, having borrowed Bowles’s personality, could do no less than live up to it. Also on second thoughts he was not so sure that he really did wish to drive this young woman away. Quite apart from her undeniable comeliness, he was becoming curious to learn what she wanted of him, for intuition assured him that it was neither a favour nor a subscription. At the same time it seemed clear that he must maintain his little deception for the present; to reveal himself would be to invite her wrath, for no woman cares to be deliberately befooled by a gentleman old enough to know better. Moreover, it would be interesting to see if he could play his part successfully.

He bowed, stepped aside, and held open the door.

“Certainly, madam. If you will come this way——”

He ushered them into the drawing-room and began to remove dust-sheets and set forth chairs. As he turned again to the door, he found the small boy planted squarely athwart his path, most earnestly regarding him.

“Please,” said the small boy, “can you wiggle your ears?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied Sir Charles, and did so.

“Oo!” breathed the small boy ecstatically. “Do it again!”

Sir Charles did it again.

“There, David!” said the young lady. “Isn’t that splendid?” She bestowed another of her smiles upon the performer. “You see, so few people can *really* wiggle their ears. The last one we found was a porter at Liverpool. You don’t mind, do you?”

“Not at all, madam,” answered the wiggler of ears. “Sir Charles has always been rather proud of my—ah—accomplishment. If you will allow me to prepare the tea, I shall be delighted to wiggle them again later.”

The preparation of tea proved a task of some little difficulty, as it must in any well-conducted flat which has lain untenanted for a week. Intensive search, however, rewarded Sir Charles with an unopened tin of biscuits and a tea caddy; milk he achieved by a furtive dash to the housekeeper’s lair in the basement. In due course he returned to the drawing-room, heated, flushed but triumphant, bearing a laden tray in the true Bowlesian manner.

“Thank you so much,” said the young lady. “Have you had yours, by the way? No? Then please fetch another cup and have it with us. You can wiggle your ears at the same time, you see, which will be very convenient.”

So Sir Charles fetched another cup, and anon was facing his visitor across the table. With each passing moment his curiosity increased, for, though he had met everybody in London at one time or another, he had never met this young lady before, and it seemed incredible that one of her calibre could have remained hidden. He could not imagine why she had called upon him. He wished that he knew her name, and was wondering how Bowles would have elicited it without appearing presumptuous, when her next remark smote him as a shot from a gun.

“And how is Sir Charles’s son?” asked the lady. “Mr. John Verity. Do you take sugar?”

Sir Charles stiffened in his chair; his eyes snapped and the jut of his jaw was suddenly more noticeable.

“Sir Charles,” he said, “has no son. No sugar, thank you.”

“Oh, ho!” observed the lady calmly. “I see. Of course you would belong to that camp. Very nice and faithful of you, I’m sure. But, you see, I know Mr. Verity quite well.”

Sir Charles said nothing, very watchfully.

"I hoped," said the young lady pensively, "that Sir Charles would have got over it by now. After all, it was—let me see—seven years ago, wasn't it?"

"A shop-girl!" snapped Sir Charles.

"I know, but why not? Of course I can quite understand that Sir Charles would have preferred Lady Dinah Frayling as a daughter-in-law, but then it wasn't he who'd have had to marry her, was it?"



"Please," said the small boy, "can you wiggle your ears?" "Certainly, sir," replied Sir Charles, and did so. "Oo!" breathed the small boy ecstatically. "Do it again!"

"Sir Charles will never get over it, madam."

"No? But was it so very terrible? Mr. Verity married the person he wanted to marry, instead of the person his father wanted him to marry. Is that a crime?"

"They were engaged, confound it!" barked Sir Charles, forgetful of the personality of Bowles.

"Ah, yes," said the young lady, peering absently into her cup. "For a fortnight, I think. Then it was broken off, and Mr. John

ran away with his shop-girl. Yes, that was it."

"A—a person from a flower-shop!" snorted Sir Charles, his tone placing persons

I'd rather have a daughter-in-law who knew how to arrange flowers than one who only knew the difference between Canterbury and English."



"'There, David!' said the young lady. 'Isn't that splendid?' She bestowed another of her smiles upon the performer. 'You see, so few people can *really* wiggle their ears. The last one we found was a porter at Liverpool.'"

from flower-shops slightly below pickpockets in the social scale.

"But how much nicer," said the lady, "than a person from a pork butcher's!"

Sir Charles glared at her hotly. "Look here," he demanded fiercely, "who the devil are you?"

The visitor raised her eyebrows and

turned upon him a glance so glacial, so eloquent of displeasure, so pregnant with reproof, that, had he been the genuine Bowles, he must instantly have wilted and expired. So might a grand dame of the Regency have set a forward lackey in his place. Sir Charles, much against his will, felt utterly abashed.

"Really," said the grand dame to the lackey, "I admire your devotion to your master, but I am not accustomed to being spoken to like that. I don't think Sir Charles would altogether approve——"

"I beg your pardon," said Sir Charles huskily, "but——"

"Then that's all right. Let's forget it. Do have some more tea."

Sir Charles, by swallowing thrice rapidly, achieved speech.

"Look here, there's something I——"

The voice of the small boy made itself heard. "He said he'd wiggle his ears again, mummie."

The small boy's mother looked brightly at Sir Charles. "*Would* you mind? He does love it so."

Mutely Sir Charles wiggled his ears again.

"Thank you," said the small boy solemnly.

"Thank you," said the small boy's mother. "Now finish that biscuit, David, or you won't get another."

Sir Charles drew a long breath and tried again.

"Look here—about John——"

The young lady surveyed him reflectively. "I suppose," she said, "you've been with Sir Charles a long time?"

Sir Charles started, stared, and took a grip of himself.

"Eh? Yes—a very long time."

"That accounts for it, of course."

"Accounts for what?"

"For your—well, calling Mr. Verity 'John,' and all that. It sounded," said the visitor, "just a little *odd*, you know. But I quite understand. My cook always calls me 'darlint,' which is rather sweet of her, I think."

There ensued a short silence, while Sir Charles, who had never been known to admit defeat, thought intensively. Presently he tried a new line of approach, speaking respectfully, almost humbly.

"You wished to see Sir Charles urgently?"

She nodded. "I've something to say to him. Does he know where Mr. Verity is now, by the way?"

"In Canada, I believe," said Sir Charles stiffly.

"And prospering, too. Personally, I think it was quite a good day for him when Sir Charles kicked him out." She tilted her charming head to one side and looked at him. "Tell me, please, do *you* think Mr. Verity behaved badly to Lady Dinah?"

"The man who jilts a woman," said Sir Charles grimly, "is a cad."

The young lady nodded her hearty agreement with this view. "Oh, quite so. Still, Lady Dinah wasn't frightfully upset, was she? I mean, she married Mr. Forrester a month later, didn't she?"

"That had nothing to do with it."

"Ah," said David's mother, "I thought so! Then Mr. Verity never told Sir Charles about that evening in the conservatory. He wouldn't, of course."

Sir Charles stared. "Conservatory? What conservatory?"

"That," said the young lady, "is what I wanted to speak to Sir Charles about. I thought it would do him a lot of good to hear what Mr. Verity overheard in the conservatory at the Foulke-Fosters' dance."

Sir Charles stared on.

"I wanted to tell him," pursued the young lady, as if to herself, "that Mr. Verity meant to marry Lady Dinah, chiefly to please his father. Then he met the shop-girl, and that made it rather difficult. Still, he'd have gone through with it because he thought Lady Dinah was really fond of him. He thought so till he overheard her talking to Mr. Forrester in the conservatory at the Foulke-Fosters' dance."

Sir Charles stared on.

"A bit of luck for Mr. Verity, in my opinion," mused the young lady. "He overheard Lady Dinah tell Mr. Forrester that she was going to marry Mr. Verity because that was where the money was, but that her marriage needn't make the least difference to them—to her and Mr. Forrester, that is. They could go on just as before, she said, because Mr. Verity was a good deal of a fool."

Sir Charles opened his mouth.

"So Mr. Verity changed her for the shop-girl," said the young lady, "and really I can't blame him. He was rather hurt when Sir Charles kicked him out, but he couldn't explain about the conservatory, could he? I don't often interfere in other people's business, but it seemed to me that if Sir Charles knew about the conservatory he couldn't possibly keep up this ridiculous Lyceum attitude of his. Mr. Verity's really quite a passable man, and Sir Charles must

be fairly lonely by now. David, put that cup down, dear."

Seven and a half seconds slid by while Sir Charles continued to stare. Then, with great suddenness, he brought his fist down upon the table.

"Who are you?" he cried.

"Now, what *is* the use," said David's mother, "of my telling David to put that cup down if you go and knock it off the table again at once?"

"Who are you?" roared Sir Charles.

She smiled at him very sweetly. "I don't see," she said, "how I could possibly know all this if I wasn't the shop-girl."

Sir Charles bounded in his chair. "What! You? The *shop-girl*? You?"

"Well, one must earn a living somehow, and I love flowers, father-in-law."

A weird, strangled noise issued from Sir Charles.

"You—you know who I am?" he asked feebly.

"Naturally," answered Mrs. John Verity. "You don't suppose I'd have asked myself to tea and discussed such very private affairs with you if I'd thought you were the butler, do you? Even shop-girls know better than that. Just at first I wasn't sure, but I knew the moment you spoke, because you've got John's voice. I'd have told you who I was long ago if you hadn't tried to pull my leg."

Sir Charles said nothing, that being all he was capable of saying. He waggled his hands in a futile manner, tugged out a vast handkerchief of multi-coloured silk and mopped his brow. Mrs. John Verity rose from her chair, crossed to his side and patted him soothingly upon the head.

"There, there!" she said. "It's all right now, father-in-law. I know this silly business had gone on long enough, but John's very obstinate—he inherits it. But in the end I made him let me try. I can make him let me do most things," she added modestly.

Sir John put away his handkerchief, drew a deep breath, seized his daughter-in-law's hand and shook it earnestly.

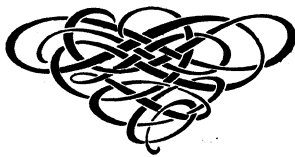
"Shop-girl," said he, "I take it all back. I'll cable John to-day."

"There's a quicker way than that," returned Mrs. John Verity, "and ever so much cheaper." Very gracefully she crossed the room to the window, thrust it open and looked out. "You can come in now, John," she said. Then she turned away, took her son by the hand and led him to Sir Charles.

"David, dear," she informed him, "this very pleasant gentleman is your grandfather. Say something nice to him."

Solemnly Master Verity regarded Sir Charles; solemnly he spoke.

"Please," said Master Verity, "will you wiggle your ears again?"



## A HILL-TOP.

**T**IME moves not here at all  
On this serenest height  
Of gorse and curlew-call.  
Unchanged for my delight  
The leisured brook, the tarn, the sea in sight.

Time moves not here at all.  
The fireless savage knew  
The gorse, the curlew-call,  
Unapprehended blue,  
And leisured brook and tarn and ample view.

ERIC CHILMAN.

# THE PLEASURE TRIP

By W. PETT RIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURIE TAYLER

MISS ALLINGHAM came on deck as the *Lyndoch* (3,550 tons) made its way past Greenwich, and Mr. Winchilsea, turning from an inspection through field glasses of the College, stumbled against her. "Forgive me," he exclaimed, and "I beg your pardon," she said. And she went on, with open distress on her agreeable features, in search of the captain. The captain had already taken the remote department favoured by those in charge of sea traffic, and Miss Allingham had to be content with a deck steward; him she mistakenly addressed in the tones of imperative command.

"Fetch my luggage at once," she ordered. "Stop the ship, and get something to take me off at Gravesend."

"Miss," he asked ironically, "are you sure there's nothing else, while you are about it?"

"A gentleman is here," she explained, "whom I have the best reasons for wishing to avoid. Not later than a week ago we decided never to meet again. By a terrible piece of misfortune——"

"You'll have to make the best of it," said the deck steward. "And, for mercy's sake, drop the idea of going to the boss. If you do, he'll tell you off as you've never been told off yet. As to stopping the boat, why, that's purely and simply"—he spoke with great distinctness—"a bit of childish nonsense."

She gazed around as the youth went off; it was evident she hoped to find manly help of a more useful nature. Passengers gave her no encouraging signs; all seemed intent upon their own comfort. Below there was the Mrs. Crompton (widow) who shared the cabin, but to her Miss Allingham, on first introduction, had given an elaborate story of a breakdown in health, consequent on overwork in finishing a novel, the truth being that she read but did not write fiction, and anything like excessive occupation she had always avoided. Indeed, it

was in regard to this that the quarrel with Mr. Winchilsea had happened.

Mr. Winchilsea came, bearing in his hand a note. He signalled to the deck steward and gave him the envelope with whispered instructions; it was promptly delivered.

"Dear Millicent," read Miss Allingham, and thought of the correspondence in the same handwriting that had opened in a more affectionate way, "this is an unfortunate incident for which neither of us is to blame. I suggest that during the voyage we treat each other as ordinary acquaintances, making no allusion to the scene which took place in Room Number Four of the National Gallery a few days since. —"

"Please send me a line.

"GEORGE WINCHILSEA."

Across the letter Miss Allingham wrote the word "Agreed!" The deck steward again performed the duty of messenger. Apparently he was well recompensed for the service; he returned and made a brief oration to Miss Allingham on the subject of the trials and troubles of this world. He pointed out that there was no sense in making overmuch of these, for half of them did not exist, and of the other half it could be said they would certainly vanish if you ignored them.

"Going to be a perfectly delightful trip," remarked Mrs. Crompton, striding along. She went the length of the upper deck and, in her desire for exercise, kept up an intermittent conversation, with sentences flung as she went by. The plan saved Miss Allingham the necessity of answering.

"Such a jolly set of people on board," was the next comment.

And "I've been chatting with some of them already."

And "One of the men knows you slightly. A Mr. Winchilsea, an architect, found we were sharing a cabin, and asked me to look after you."

Finally—when she had reached the total number of promenades desired—she brought

a deck chair to the side of Miss Allingham. "If there is anything on your mind, dear," she said eagerly, "don't be afraid to tell me all about it."

"Just now," said the other, "I haven't a mind. And if I had, there would be nothing on it."

The widow was not easily rebuffed. "If it is anything to do with love," she said, "I feel sure I can be helpful. I've lost two husbands."

"Have you inquired at Scotland Yard?"

Not until the summons came for tea did the widow cease her efforts. At the tables Miss Allingham contrived to escape her, and was rewarded by the presence of a rather elderly gentleman who told

escorted her when she expressed a craving for fresh air. This was at twenty minutes to five. Before six o'clock her companion had made an offer of marriage, with a cordial invitation to share his trials and his joys. He added a complete financial statement.

"May I have time to think it over?" she asked.



"Stop the ship, and get something to take me off at Gravesend."

her all there was to be known about his sufferings from phlebitis. Away in a corner, Mr. Winchelsea seemed to be doing well with an anecdote he was relating to young women. Miss Allingham wondered which story it was. He knew five in all, and two of them were good. Spurred by his aspect of cheerfulness, she increased her attention from the other side of the table to the recital. As a consequence, the rather elderly gentleman said again everything he had said, and

He glanced at his watch. "You can give me your reply at dinner," he said.

"There is one question I should like to ask. Do you ever talk of anything but your phlebitis?"

"Rarely!" he admitted.

At the evening meal she announced that, after giving much thought to the matter, she had decided that the answer must be "No." Mrs. Crompton, seated near, overheard this, and later conducted a cross-



examination in her own masterly style ; that night, and before she retired, the exhilarating rumour went to and fro that the trip had already resulted in one romantic incident. A pleasing augury. The news came in its turn to Winchilsea in the smoking-room, and it was observed that when the names of the parties were mentioned he laid his cigar very carefully on a brass tray and did not relight it.

In a general way, descriptions of a voyage down Channel, and preparing to cross the Bay, have to include, on the second day out, a delicate allusion to the less pleasing side of a sea journey ; in the case of the *Lyndoch* nothing of the kind is required. The

taking his arm ; the two marched together, and passengers noted that a friendship was being created. Later, Winchilsea was able to bring in Miss Allingham and to make her known to the rest, and this enabled her to escape from the phlebitis gentleman and from Mrs. Crompton. Both had hitherto claimed rights upon her time and her conversation.

"This is very kind," she remarked aside.

"I want you to enjoy yourself," declared Winchilsea with earnestness. "It is indispensable to both of us to try to forget."

"But not easy," sighed Miss Allingham. She found, from one highly presentable youth, that Winchilsea had alluded in



"The brigands  
apologised for  
the circum-  
stance . . .

passengers who felt indisposed on the quay, ere going on board, stayed in their cabins now, but the rest took breakfast and all the other meals, joined in the deck games that had been promptly started. Winchilsea found himself appointed Master of Sports, and this made it necessary that he should speak to folk without introduction, and excused him for doing so. The captain, relaxing austerity, looked on approvingly, and presently honoured Winchilsea by

terms of compliment to her powers as an artist in black-and-white ; the young man presented his autograph book, asking her to draw something in it. A sketch of the captain, wearing his most defensive look, was received with gratitude, and from that moment Miss Allingham's popularity was assured. All desired a similar caricature, and eventually Winchilsea had to interpose. They had to remember, he said, that Miss Allingham was taking the trip for the benefit

of her health, and too much ought not to be exacted from her.

"But just one more," each pleaded, "She dashes them off so quickly that one more——"

"I cannot allow it," declared Winchilsea firmly.

An energetic young woman, not often balked in any enterprise, went, so to speak, over his head and, approaching Miss

formed during their earlier acquaintance that she could do it with eyes shut.

"You don't object?" she asked of him.

"Of course not," he answered readily, "I never object to anything that you do."

"It is what I do not do that you criticise," she suggested. "You called me lazy."

"We won't talk about that. It is not likely we shall agree. Remember that we have still eighteen days left of this cruise,

and let us do our best to keep on good terms with each other." He beckoned to the ship's doctor, and, introducing him to Miss Allingham, went off to superintend the games.

"You, like myself," said the doctor pleasantly, "have little or no occupation."

"I prefer it," she mentioned.

"There is much to be argued in favour of indolence," he agreed. "There would be everything on its side if we could but make a living at it."

"The raging, tearing, furious career," declared

Miss Allingham, "I leave to others. For me, the quiet life. I work only when it suits me to do so."

"An ideal existence. But only possible to those who have an income to rely upon."

"Man wants but little here below, and woman can do with a good deal less. By the by, when do we again encounter the anxieties of land?"

"First stop Tangiers," replied the doctor. "Haven't you put your name down for one of the excursions?"

"Too much bother," she said languidly.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was exactly a week later that four individuals set out to walk from a point thirty miles in towards the African port



... that they had to keep the horses and deprive the four of money and jewellery."

Allingham directly, obtained the sketch. And this she exhibited proudly to the captain, who, after close inspection, remarked: "Clever, no doubt, but scarcely in good taste!"

That evening he spoke publicly from his table at dinner. Complaints, he said, had reached him, and in the interests of good-fellowship he felt bound to take notice of them. Caricatures, so he understood, were being passed around, and as these were of a crude and impertinent nature, he hoped that folk owning them would straightway throw them overboard; the parties who executed the drawings would be good enough to accept this as a warning. In spite of this, the drawings were preserved, but thenceforth Miss Allingham sketched no one but Winchilsea—a task she had so often per-

alluded to by the medical man. The adventurous folk who had detained them, in the hope of securing ransom, having discovered that the *Lyndoch* had left Tangiers to continue its voyage—the fact that Miss Allingham was amongst the missing probably influenced the captain's decision—now resolved to let them go. The brigands apologised for the circumstance that they had to keep the horses and deprive the four of money and jewellery.

"Rather a gentlemanly set," declared Mrs. Crompton, looking back.

"For some reason," said the elderly gentleman, "I have not been troubled with my phlebitis."

"I propose," said Winchilsea, "that we make up our minds to do three miles an hour."

"But for your damaged condition," said Miss Allingham, "—and you certainly put up a very good fight—we could do more."

Their captors had provided them with a limited supply of food, and the consumption of this was measured carefully. That night they rested near a small village which they did not dare to enter. In the morning it was found that Winchilsea's injuries prevented him from moving. A council was held, and Mrs. Crompton said at once that it was unthinkable to allow the two young people to remain by themselves; the elderly gentleman set out bravely, and promised to bring means of conveyance at the earliest moment. No sooner had he vanished from sight than the widow announced that she was about to draw her last breath.

"It's a pity," she mentioned resignedly, "but it had to happen sooner or later. And I do hope it won't lead to scandal about you two."

For thirty-six hours Miss Allingham worked as few have been called upon to work; she herself admitted that she found a new joy in being completely busy. Mrs. Crompton, out of sheer gratitude, made her will, leaving everything to the girl; she omitted to sign the document, but this mattered the less, seeing that, the job over, she at once began to make a recovery in health. When the British consul and his clerk appeared, leading horses, Miss Allingham had just gone to sleep, and the other two would not permit her to be awakened.

"She has worn herself out for our sake," said Winchilsea, gazing at her admiringly.

"Nurse, cook, and comforter," asserted Mrs. Crompton, "all in one."

The *Lyndoch* called at Tangiers on its return from the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and the four put off in a boat and rejoined their fellow-passengers. The captain announced that the sight of them took a great burden from his thoughts; he presented them with a London journal obtained at Malta, and Miss Allingham discovered that the concern in which her money was invested had gone into liquidation. "I shall have to turn up my sleeves now," she said cheerfully, and Winchilsea nodded.

He was more eloquent that evening, after dinner, when they sat on deck. The other travellers, and especially the youthful, had increased the terms of friendship; a sound of exchanged kisses came at intervals.

"For some reason," said Miss Allingham, "all this makes me feel most profoundly single."

"That, my dear sweetheart," he declared, "can be easily remedied so soon as we arrive in London!"





HOW DID IT GO?

THERE is no great trouble in the family—they are only trying to remember how that new fox-trot goes that they heard last night.

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### A DOMESTIC DILEMMA. By Jessie Pope.

MRS. ROBINSON, peeping through the window curtain, saw trouble coming slowly along the pavement. Without a second glance, she hurried heavily from the room and called on the name of her daughter Doris in tones of frenzy. A door opened above and Doris, of elegant appearance and undisturbed manner, came to the banisters and leaned languidly over.

"Here's your Uncle Henry coming up the road," announced her mother's anguished voice, "and your father's gone to business without tapping the beer!"

"Well, it can't be helped," replied Doris. "Why don't you offer him sherry?"

Mrs. Robinson's anguish turned suddenly to anger. "Offer him *sherry*, indeed! You must be mad! Offer him *sherry* when it's our strong country beer he always comes for! You know he says he can never get it anywhere else. Offer him *sherry*! Is that all you can say? Oh, whatever shall I do?"

Doris had a volume of Maeterlinck in one hand and a Cox's orange pippin in the other. With Uncle Henry's generous assistance, she had finished in Paris, but her new habit for foreign literature had not spoilt her old one for English apples. Tossing both into her bedroom armchair, she descended to the field of action.

"Don't get excited, mother," she said. "Entertain him for ten minutes while I go down into the cellar and tap it."

"You? You don't know how!" cried her mother.

"I'm going to learn," replied Doris calmly, and as she spoke there came a loud and determined knock at the front door. The distressed matron scurried back into the dining-room, and as Doris, armed with tap and mallet, descended into the dusk of the cellar stairs, preceded by Mary, the maid, with a candle, and followed by Dinkie, the Persian kitten, she heard her mother welcoming the prosperous uncle with the hearty cordiality that goes with country breeding.

The beer barrel was placed under the cellar stairs, and a damp, beery smell assailed the young lady's delicate nostrils. Crouching down, she carefully chipped away the sealing-wax from the bung-hole, placed the tap into position, and, with her pulses beating quicker than usual, but outwardly calm, she gave the first blow with the mallet. But that blow had to be repeated many times before the bung showed the slightest inclination to budge. At last there came signs of yielding, and under a frantic shower of blows, with only one small jet of liquid escaping, the tap drove triumphantly home.

Doris stood up and straightened her back. She was breathing hard, and extremely pleased with herself.

"How's that, Mary?" she remarked calmly.

"Oh, lovely, miss!" ejaculated the admiring

maid, who had prudently retired to the stairs for cover. "Master generally spills a deal more than that."

"Well, there's no need to, apparently," observed Doris, examining her thumb, which had come in for some share of the hammering. "Here, give me the key of the tap and the jug, and I'll draw some."

But the key proved awkward and refused to turn, until Mary suggested that "Master sometimes 'it it with the 'ammer to give it a start."

Acting on this advice, Doris tapped the key smartly, once, twice, thrice, and the third blow brought—chaos! For there came a sudden bursting explosion, the very air seethed with fury, clamouring round her in hissing, bursting tumults. A savage rush of liquid hit her full in the face and projected her, she knew not

"Give me the jug," she said huskily.

The key turned, the jug was filled, the barrel was tapped.

Trembling in every limb, Doris turned once more to mount the cellar stairs, and, as she did so, caught sight of a weird object. With flattened ears, drooping tail, and fur standing in drenched points all over its rat-like body, shaking and flicking each paw with tiny accompanying sneezes, crept Dinkie, the Persian kitten. Doris gave a choking laugh and stooped to stroke it, but it turned and swore and disappeared inside the kitchen fender. Equally bedraggled, but with more philosophy, Doris sent Mary into the dining-room with the tray, and crept noiselessly towards the stairs. Soaked in strong beer, her thumb swollen and bleeding, her hair matted with the seeds and leaves of the pungent-smelling hop, there was yet a light of triumph in her eyes. But, alas, the dining-room door was slightly open as she tip-toed by, and her Uncle Henry's wheezy,



GEOGRAPHICAL EXACTITUDE.

DAUGHTER: Mumsie, I've got such a pain!

MOTHER: Where, dear?

DAUGHTER: Where the ice-cream is.

how, into the open door of the coal cellar opposite. For some seconds she was both blind and deaf; then the flickering candle pierced the tumult, and from the shelter of the stairs a voice piped:

"Lor, miss, the tap's come out! What shall we do?"

There was only one thing to do, and Doris did it. Every moment meant a quart of strong country beer, and every moment was precious. Feeling her way back to the spurting fury, she stopped the outrush with one slender hand, and with the other groped on the floor for the tap. To force it in its place, rain blows upon it till it was firm as a rock, was the work of a few frenzied moments. Then she held out her hand.

blustering voice reached her: "Beer! My dear lady—*beer!* What! With a cold like this on my chest, it's rank poison! Now, a glass of your brown *sherry*—"

The heroic light in Doris's eyes faded suddenly.

"Mary," she said in a tired voice, "turn the bath on, and then go and mop it up."



"I do not require that the man who marries my daughter shall be rich," said her father. "All I ask is that he should be able to keep out of debt."

"Would you consider a man to be in debt who borrows money from his father-in-law?" inquired the suitor.

## THE WRONG DIAGNOSIS.

*By Herbert Hamelin.*

"OH, you are only half a man!" snapped Lavender. "I can't think why I ever married you," she added, as she went out, slamming the door.

I had often debated that problem myself without arriving at a solution, but I did seem to be a most unsatisfactory thing in husbands—according to Lavender, anyhow. I went out, pondering over the matter, and unbosomed myself to old Brown at the club. He has been married for years, and still laughs.

"I know what is the matter with you, old chap!" he cried, slapping me heartily on the back. "You are much too good and patient with your wife. That sort of thing is out of fashion now; women don't appreciate it. What they want is the jolly old sheik stuff, the strong, masterful man, you know. Take my advice and treat 'em rough—they just wallow in it."

I decided I would.

I slammed the front door quite hard when I got home, and stumped into the drawing-room with my little muddy boots and my hat on, looking indignantly at my watch.

"Why the deuce isn't dinner ready yet?" I demanded sourly. "It is three minutes late."

"But you are not changed yet, darling" said Lavender, looking rather surprised.

"B-r-r-mp!" I growled. "I ordered dinner for seven-thirty; you should see that it is ready."

I rather enjoyed that dinner, on the whole.

Lavender left the table before the end, and Mary was in floods of tears; she upset the gravy all over the new Axminster. It was certainly a little unfortunate about the whisky decanter, a full one—I thumped the table so hard in my rage that it bounced off on the floor and broke.



AN EDITORIAL TOUCH.

MAID (after giving notice): And as I'm leaving I might as well tell you as you've got the date of my arrival here wrong in your diary!

It was a glorious time, though, while it lasted. The whole household trembled at my lightest word. The cat and my wife's mother left us altogether, the dog only came home for meals, but the cave-man stuff is all finished now. I got such an awful shock.

When I came home one night, I heard voices in the drawing-room. I crept to the door and listened. It was Lavender and that garrulous old bore Robins, our doctor, who is always dropping round.

"Um—ah—yes!" I heard him say. "That is the word we use in the profession for that variety of mental derangement when the patient, an ordinary placid person, suddenly changes his character and becomes wild and violent.

"I always prescribe," he went on prosily, "low diet, no late hours, no smoking or alcohol, no. . . ."

I didn't wait for any more horrors, but stole silently out into the night.

It wasn't for simply weeks afterwards, when

### STRATEGY.

Should Love, forgetting how to smile,  
Brood sullen, inattentive,  
Leave him alone a little while,  
By way of an incentive.

From all anxiety refrain,  
And do not try to smooth him;  
Nor ever languish or complain,  
For you would surely lose him.

Behave as though you did not care—  
Love loves a little rigour. . .  
He'll fall headlong into your snare,  
His love grown all the bigger!

*Eugène Martin.*



THE MISSING WORD.

FIRST UNWASHED: What's a word wif four letters beginning wif "s," "o" and ending wif "p"?  
SECOND DITTO (after long consideration): I dunno!

the prize arrived, that I discovered that they had not been talking about me at all. Lavender had only been asking the old fool for some medical term, meaning a form of dementia, for her beastly cross-word puzzle.



JONES: I gather that the super-sousaphone is the largest brass band instrument ever made in America.

SMITH: Well, I don't mind, so long as they keep it there.

"Both Herbert and Harold proposed to me yesterday," said Cora.

"And you refused them both," declared Cynthia.

"Yes, but how did you know?"

"I saw them shaking hands over something in the street this morning."



THE thrilling news comes from Los Angeles that an animal trainer there is teaching a lion to play the saxophone. Perhaps it was this that made the fox-trot.

## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

To whoever is responsible for the introduction of the railway cinema.

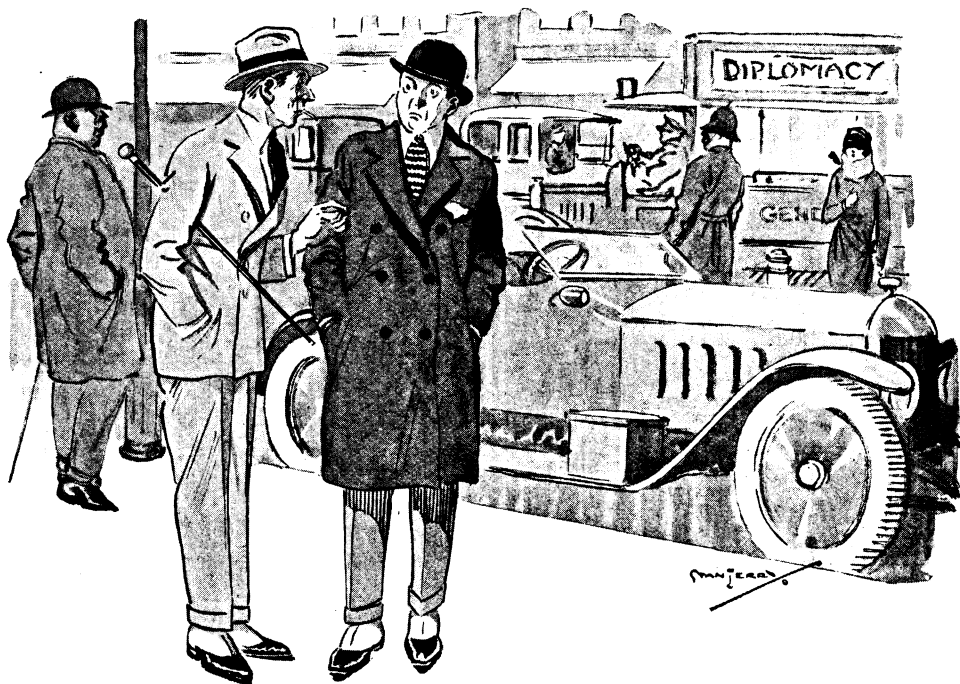
Sir, whoever you may be,  
Take these humble thanks from me  
For your genius in devising  
A new stunt so enterprising.  
Never need we dread again  
Travelling by railway train:  
Never need we, as of yore,  
Suffer from our neighbour's snore,  
From his children's orange peel,  
From his infant's ceaseless squeal,  
From his spouse's fretful frown  
When we let the window down.  
Never, twiddling idle thumbs,  
Need we count the sandwich crumbs  
Taking temporary rest  
On the fat man's crumpled chest:

But, Sir, though we lap up gladly  
Stories ending well or badly,  
(Even stand the close-up kiss),  
There's a limit and it's this:—  
Show us comedies and dramas,  
Travel pictures of Grand Lamas,  
Breathless escapades and chases,  
Realistic motor races,  
Soulful sighs and purple pashes . . .  
**BUT DON'T SHOW US RAILWAY  
SMASHES!**

*B. Noël Saxelby.*



An eminent scientist, who has been engaged in measuring ancient and modern skulls, states that our faces are growing longer. The ancients, of course, had better weather and no Income Tax.



AND AFTER THAT?

SMITH: Lend me five quid till Thursday, will you?

JONES: Why Thursday?

SMITH: Well, you don't expect me to make it last longer than that, do you?

Nor, in search of more distraction,  
Find our only satisfaction  
In the flies that roller skate  
On the thin man's hairless pate.

Now, O Friend Philanthropist,  
From this deadly little list  
With your kind co-operation  
We achieve emancipation  
And, while fast we speed and far,  
To our waggons hitch a Star.  
What although the train is late,  
If thereby we learn the fate  
Of the villain and the vamp  
Or the portly parson's gamp?

OVERHEARD AT THE EXHIBITION: All right, Maria. You nip off to this 'ere Palace of Art, if you like, but I'm out for enjoyment—I'm going down the bloomin' coal mine.



A DEAR old lady had been listening to a young singer at an "At Home."

"Thank you so much," she said. "Your song took me back to my childhood on my father's farm. I seemed to hear the old gate creaking in the wind."



# LINES ON SHOOTING A RECORD PUKU.

The Puku is a small antelope which abounds in Northern Rhodesia and the Katanga.

Let others boast the Brontosauri,  
The elephant, buffalo or worse,  
Which they've left wallowing in their gore,  
Don't care for them a tinker's curse:  
For I by some amazing fluke—ooh!—  
Have gone and shot the record Puku.

Some men will tell all round the clock tales  
Of battle with the brutal Boche,  
And others—after several cocktails—  
Of how they nobly helped to squash  
The riots led by Harry Thuku\*—  
But, anyhow, I shot the Puku.

Now all the fauna and felidae  
Flee from before me in great fear,  
And growl or grunt: "Come, let us hide; he  
Is the great hunter. We must clear."

Because I gave that Puku ram pain  
From which, incontinent, it died.  
No more I'll eat the humble K'uku;†  
I am the man who shot the Puku.

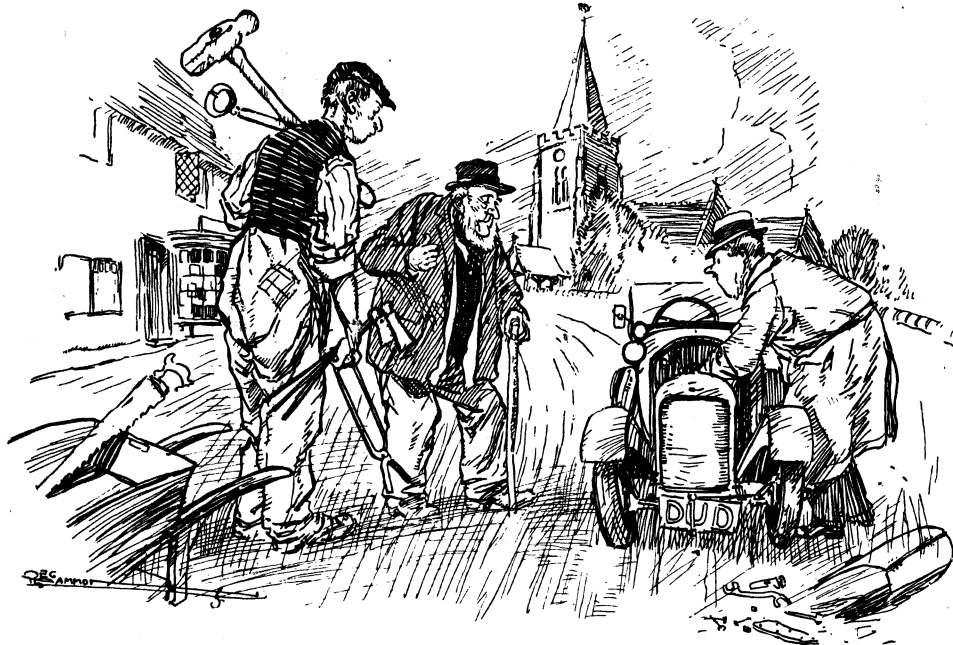
And when I die, a public hero,  
Men shall, amid the organ strains,  
Hear the episcopal accents clear: "Oh,  
Look now upon the last remains  
Of this great man—my brethren, look!—who  
With aim unerring shot the Puku."

*C. Lestock Reid.*

† K'uku—the African fowl, the last refuge of the hungry



SOUTH AMERICAN paying guests must be hard to please if the following advertisement from a local paper failed to attract: "Goog oppotuny for a snigla refined gentleman. Large room nicely furnished, splendid food. Six windoros facing the sea, quite close to bashing beach."



KINDLY MEANT.

ANCIENT (to harassed motorist): Our Jim 'ere can 'elp ye, sir; 'e be powerful 'andy with 'is tools.

And all the ring-doves round me do coo:  
"This is the man who shot the Puku."

I'm greater than the politicians,  
Who, after all, can only shout;  
Than the financiers, mostly fishy 'uns,  
And honest workmen point me out:  
'E's 'otter stuff than any dook 'oo  
Shoots only grouse—'e shot the Puku."

So now I'll always live on champagne,  
And lap it down with conscious pride,

\* Nairobi, March 15, 16, 1922.

HARRY came in from school with a swollen eye and cut cheek, and explained that he had been fighting Tommy Smith.

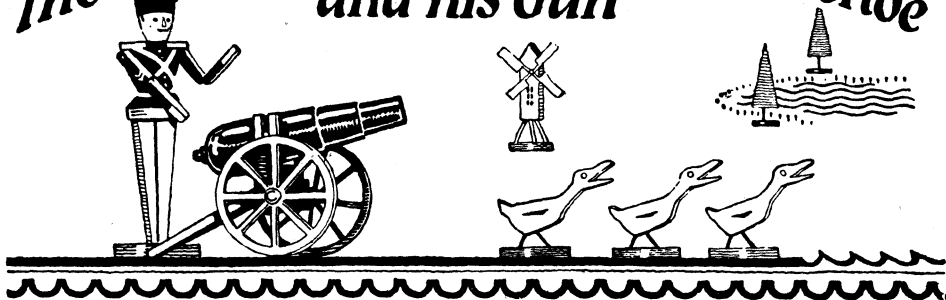
"You really shouldn't fight with that Smith boy," said his mother impatiently.

"I know that, mother," he said sadly.  
"I found it out a minute after I hit him."



An advertisement in a weekly paper says: "Young man wanted for ice-cream barrow; live in." Quite an ideal residence during a heat wave.

# The Adventures of Corporal Timbertoe and his Gun



"Stand still, you ducks!" the Corporal said,  
As the ducks went marching by.

"I cannot aim my gun at you  
No matter how much I try."  
But they wouldn't do as the Corporal bid.  
Those ducks they ran away, they did,  
Into the pond, and there amid  
The reeds and things they went and hid.  
That made the Corporal cry.

But he dried his eyes when he heard this song  
(Just listen how it runs)

"Far better than all the food shot with  
Is the Food that's shot from Guns!"

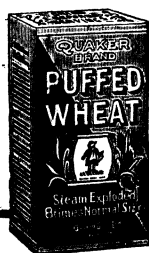
The story of how these Foods are shot from guns is  
told fully on the packets.

It is quite true. Puffed Wheat—  
or Puffed Rice, for that matter  
—"the Food shot from Guns," is  
tastier, lighter, easier to digest  
than any other food. The big,  
fairy-food-grains have had every  
cell in them exploded for easy  
digestion. For breakfast they

are a good, give-me-some-more  
dish. As a sweet, at lunch-time,  
with fresh fruit, they make a deli-  
cious change. For supper, with  
milk, they assure sound, sweet  
sleep. *And they don't need any  
cooking.* Get a packet of each  
to-day and see which you prefer.

## Puffed Wheat

Your Grocer sells  
both kinds.



## Puffed Rice

Made & Guaranteed  
by Quaker Oats Ltd.  
London.

THE whole family had gone out for the day to try to gather enough blackberries to make a stock of jam for the winter months. They had taken their food with them, and proposed to find some nice, shady spot to eat it in.

After getting scratched on every available blackberry bush and getting very few berries, they spread out their meal and commenced operations.

Father launched the attack on a thick ham sandwich.

"This ham doesn't taste right," he said, as he munched it.

"Well," said mother, "the shopman said that it was cured last week."

"Last week!" ejaculated father. "Well, take it from me, Emily, it's had a relapse."

# A COUNTRY CRICKET MATCH.

By Gilbert Davis.

With chin in hands, full-length upon the grass,  
In drowsy peace the sunny hours soon pass.  
This insect on my sleeve—how strange and small!  
Oh, dash it! Let them get the wretched ball  
Themselves. I want my tea.  
I'm looking forward to it pleasantly.

A boundary? Yes, judging by the crack.  
I think I'll turn a while upon my back.  
The sun is strong. Hat well down over eye:  
Leaves just a tiny peep of cloudless skies.  
"How's that?" Another of them out.  
Why don't the village look what they're about?



THE PROOF OF A PROVERB.

CURATE: I suppose you've heard about the fire up at Mrs. Brown's last night?

VILLAGER: Ay, and I bain't surprised. When I coom by about ten, I sees smoke a-pooring out o' them windows, and says I: "Where there be smoke there be fire," and sure enough 'twas!

"Have you heard about Robinson? He took a dose of the new drug caapi, which makes cowards very brave, and went straight home and discharged his cook."

"Splendid!"

"It wasn't. The cook had been taking some caapi, too, and hit him over the head with a rolling-pin."



A WRITER in a ladies' journal says that women are always losing their keys. Quite so, and nowadays they are always losing their locks.

An angry buzz—some honey-seeking bee.

All right, it's passed. How plainly one can see  
Against the sky the tops of those tall trees!

A butterfly has settled on my knees.

There, now it's gone! I wonder what's the score.

What? Ninety-three for eight... Good man! A four!

Do it again. Good Heavens, what a ball!

It's got him, though. That's pretty nearly all.

John's bowling's good, but he's a hopeless bat.

Ah, out first ball! I'm not surprised at that.

There's nothing now I really want to see,

And... Splendid! I can hear the bell for tea.

*Mary Pickford*  
*Mary Pickford*  
*Mary Pickford*

A few stitches and Cash's Woven Names are on. There they remain during the lifetime of the Garment, to insure against loss at the Laundry, College, etc.

## Cash's WOVEN NAMES

**Arnold Bennett**

**Style No. 5.**

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12 doz. (144 names) 5/-  
6 " (72 " ) 3/9  
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Send size of Footwear when ordering.

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*Kindly mention The Windsor Magazine.*




*Fresh as the Morning*

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For BILIOUSNESS, HEADACHES, SICKNESS, SKIN ERUPTIONS, INDIGESTION, and all impurities of the blood, and the maintenance of HEALTH AND VIGOUR.

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PYRETIC SALINE

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a bottle  
at all Chemists  
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*Heppells*

**164, PICCADILLY, W.1,  
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# THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

## FASHION'S VICTIMS.

My pretty wife full oft doth tell  
That *il faut souffrir pour être belle*;  
But when her bills come in, 'tis true,  
I suffer greatly, too!

Leslie M. Oyler.



THE two friends had met by chance in a London street, and one of them was a staunch teetotaler and an ardent advocate of Prohibition

FAIRFAX was a good fellow on the whole—better than most, in fact—but he had one great fault. He was no good at all at listening; he always wanted to be “it” when a conversation was in progress. All his friends noticed this, and it was beginning to make him extremely unpopular. His friend Vereker resolved to speak to him about this little failing.

“You mustn’t take offence,” he began, “if I speak to you about—er—a little bad habit of yours that I think you would do well to correct.”



TWO OF A KIND.

MABEL (indicating photos on mantelpiece): These two boys simply dote on me! The one on the left is Phyllis Smith's brother.

FRIEND (sweetly): Re-a-lly! And who is the other—er—dotard?

for all and sundry. Judge, then, of her disgust when her prize Pekinese darted through the swing-doors of a public-house which she was passing and disappeared from view.

Both women called and coaxed, but the dog would not respond. For either of them to venture inside was, of course, unthinkable, and eventually the owner of the small animal appealed to a passer-by, a working-man.

“Would you kindly fetch my little dog out of that public-house, please?”

“Suttingly, lady, suttingly,” he replied politely. “Er—which bar was you in?”

“Certainly not, old man,” replied Fairfax. “Let’s have it.”

“Well, you’re one of those fellows who never listen. You are so busy thinking about what you are going to say next that when a conversation is in progress you never hear what is being said to you. You should be more attentive.”

He waited for a while for this to sink in. After a minute or so Fairfax turned to him with a far-away look in his eyes.

“Er—ah—just what were you saying?” he inquired blandly.

THE OCTOBER  
WINDSOR

PERIODICAL ROOM  
GENERAL LIBRARY  
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NEW  
STORY

by

DORNFORD  
YATES

THE  
KING  
NET



## WONDERFUL— BUT SO DUSTY

You come in from a drive with that wonderful feeling of exhilaration— marred only by the clinging dust which works into the pores of the skin and needs a good soap to get quit of it.

Wright's is pre-eminently fitted for the job. Most searching in its cleansing operations — and at the same time most refreshing and toning to the skin.

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*6d. per tablet. BATH SIZE, 10d. per tablet.*







THE MARGARET MORRIS SCHOOL OF DANCING : A CLASS UNDER THE PINE TREES  
IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

*Photograph by Fred Daniels. See article, "The Modern Development in Dancing," page 193.*



"His lips are moving as he describes with great particularity a peak that shall serve as a landmark next time they pass this way."

# THE WAY OF A MAN WITH A MULE

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "As Other Men Are," "And Five Were Foolish," "Berry and Co.,"  
"Valerie French," "Jonah and Co.," "The Brother of Daphne," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

**E**STEPPEMAZAN has a consequence of which it is justly proud.

It is a pocket village, sunk in a trough of the mountains, with two inns and a miniature church and, right in its midst, a troubled, pelting stream and an aged bridge. And the bridge is the pride of little Esteppemazan, for it has soldiers about it and a guard-room on either side, and if you will saunter across it there will come a moment during your lazy passage when you have one foot in France and the other in Spain.

The better inn stands up above the village upon a shelf of rock: the narrow road passes before it, and there is just room for a row of plane trees to shade a terrace beyond. Then comes a sixty-foot drop to the torrent below. This roars gently, like Bottom's sucking-dove, and if you will sit to a table under the planes when the summer day is over and Esteppemazan lies like a sombre cushion stuck with points of light, and the open doors of the guard-rooms cut sharp twin rectangles out of the darkness, and if you have ears to hear, you may find

*Copyright, 1925, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.*

in its music the dignified speech of mountains, of valleys, of forests and the clouds that wait upon these, the parlance of highland pastures and dews and frosts and, if you are very much favoured, even the crisp rustle of the alb of Dawn climbing the staircase of the firmament.

The four had dined on the terrace in great contentment. True a string of mules had gone jingling by while Jeanne was waiting with an omelet in the doorway of the inn, but the strip of road was well watered and, as Pomfret had said at the time, an opportunity of studying one's future fare *en route* may be hard on the salivary glands, but, as our forefathers knew, is the prince of appetizers. And now that the meal was over they still sat around the oak table, silent and smoking and listening to the torrent below. . . .

At length—

"I'm sorry to interrupt," said Simon, "but there's work to be done."

"That's right," said Eulalie. "Maps forward and, Pomfret, turn on the light."

There was a naked lamp above them, hung from the trees, and Pomfret put up a hand and felt for the switch. . . .

"Finish the fairy-tale," said Patricia, blinking. "Never mind. Simon, show us where we are."

Her husband unfolded a map and, after a short scrutiny, took out a pencil and set its point on the linen.

"That's where we're sitting," he said. The pencil began to move. "There's the water and there's Estepemazan. There's the line we follow—practically due East—and there's our first camp. There's the bridle-path we use: happily it's fairly direct, so we can keep more or less together, but it leaves the line here and there—there, for instance, and that's where I shall break away. Then I rejoin you here. As far as possible I want to stick to that line, tread every foot of it, learn it by heart, make it our main—main—"

"Sewer?" suggested Pomfret.

"Our trunk-line," said Simon, disregarding the interjection. "Once we've got that we can branch, run parallel and do all sorts of stunts, but we'll always know where we are. We ought all to know it really, but the mules must stick to the path, so that counts at least one out. I think Pomfret had better take the mules."

There was a pregnant silence.

Then—

"Yes, that was a foregone conclusion,

wasn't it?" said Pomfret. "I may say I realised that when the brutes were bought. You've none of you said so, of course. It's always been 'we.' 'We must look after the mules.' 'We must tie the mules up.' Sometimes it's been the passive voice. 'The mules will have to be groomed.'" He laughed wildly. "If you remember, I objected from the first. They may be picturesque, but they can't compare with a good perambulator for what we want."

"My dear," wailed Patricia, "you can't push a pram over mountains."

"You can drag it and lift it and, if necessary, you can drop it. In a word, you can control it. You're arbiter of its fate. Not so the mules. If the mules don't feel like being dragged, they blinkin' well won't be dragged. And you can't get behind and shove. It's too—too exciting."

"But you won't have to drag them," purred Eulalie. "You coax them. And, besides, a perambulator would never have held enough."

"Well, a barrow, then," said Pomfret. "A sledge. Anything inanimate. But the introduction of live stock—"

"—was inevitable," said Simon uncertainly. "A car would have been the thing, but it'd never get there. Mules are used to this country."

"No doubt," said Pomfret. "My point is that we—I am not used to mules. I can precede them: should they withdraw I can follow them: if they permit me I suppose I can groom them: (I shan't do them underneath the first day: that, I think, would be presumptuous) but I can't control them. Besides, mules have a crude sense of humour. Some people call it treachery."

Patricia and Eulalie fought to restrain their mirth.

"There now," said Simon. "I knew we should forget something. We haven't a hoofpick. Perhaps Pierre will sell us one."

Pomfret regarded his finger-nails.

"'Hoofpick,'" he said reflectively. "Oh, I see. Analogous to toothpick, only lower down. Yes. I think perhaps 'we' can do without a hoofpick. I don't suppose they'll get any stones in their—"

"It isn't only for stones," said Simon. "After they've done their work you always clean out their feet. You see, they pick up dirt and stuff as they go along, and it's unhealthy."

"Yes, I can see that," said Pomfret. "I suppose you do it after they've fed, so as not to spoil their appetite." He laughed

bitterly. "Well, there's no harm in buying one, is there? They needn't know we've got it. And we'd better have a thermometer. Then I can keep an eye on their temperature."

When order had been restored—

"Seriously," said Simon shakily, "I anticipate no trouble. They're fit and amiable, and I imagine they'll do their job. If they do, after the first day the girls can take them on: and you and I'll groom one each. I wish we could do without them, but we've too much stuff to carry and a truck would be hell."

Pomfret shrugged his shoulders.

"Let us pray," he said piously, "that it will not be for long. You talk of establishing a trunk-line and then really getting to work. But if we don't strike something in the next ten days, I shall become suspicious. If Etchechuria's anywhere it's on the frontier line."

"That's right," said Eulalie, lighting a cigarette. "Be depressing at the outset. And if you'd ever paid the slightest attention when we were discussing our route, you'd know that we weren't going to follow the frontier line."

"I did hear some mouthwash of that sort," admitted Pomfret, "but I imagined the insanity had passed. You don't seriously suggest we ignore the one sign-post we've got?"

Simon sat back in his chair.

"I was waiting for this," he said. "Now listen. The frontier doesn't run straight—it winds and curls like a stream. To follow it faithfully would almost double our trek. But, what's more important than that, our very case is that the frontier line is false. Well, it seems waste of time to take our cue from a line which we're trying to prove is wrong. So we're going to steer by compass. Now and again, of course, we shall cross the line. . . ."

"We shall probably get shot for smuggling," said Pomfret. "If Balaam's in Spain and he sees some thistles in France, he won't worry about any frontier line. Balak will follow, and all our stuff'll be in balk. And whenever we cross on purpose the packs'll have to come down."

"I don't care," said Simon doggedly. "I don't pretend it's ideal, but it's the only thing to do. Besides, the frontier isn't marked with a crease, whereas with a compass-bearing you can't go wrong."

"I could," said Pomfret. "Easily. I'd rather go by night and star by the steers."

"You ought to have listened," said Patricia. "Then you could have objected before. Not that it would have made any difference, but as it is it's too late. What time do we start?"

Finding the question momentous, Pomfret deferred his protest pending Simon's reply.

"At five," said that gentleman shortly. "Jeanne has orders to call us at half-past three. You and Eulalie needn't get up till four, but Pomfret and I have got to pack the mules." Pomfret groaned. "Then with luck we ought to get in by three."

"Of course," said Pomfret, "I should hate to interrupt, but let's just translate 'get in by three.' 'Get in.' What you really mean is 'arrive.' You can't get into a mountain-side. You can arrive on it, and if you're fool enough you can spend the night on it—as we purpose to do—but without a blasting charge you can't get into it. Very well. 'Arrive by three.' Why? It won't be dark till nine. Why add six hours to our martyrdom? More. Why subtract six hours from our rest? If we're called at half-past nine—"

"The answers," said Simon, "are two. The first is that in practice we shan't 'arrive by three.' The second, that if you want to pitch a camp by starlight, I don't."

"Well, that's succinct, isn't it? At once rude and succinct. However, I've done some good. We're getting down to the truth. 'In practice we shan't arrive. . . .' All I can say is I wish you'd give up talking theoretically. Then we shall know where we are. When shall we arrive—in fact?"


"To be perfectly frank," said Simon, "it all depends upon you. If you monkey about with the mules—"

"I protest," said Pomfret, with warmth, "I do hereby protest. It is not my habit to 'monkey'—much less 'monkey about'—with beasts of burden. If you mean they may prove unruly and so delay us, that, if you remember, was the fear I ventured to express and you to deride a moment ago. But there you are. I see what's coming. Whatever the swine do wrong will be attributed to my incompetence. That's why I want a perambulator."

With a mischievous light in her eyes, Eulalie made a fresh cast.

"So long as you coax them—"

"If anyone employs that verb again said Pomfret violently, "I won't be responsible for what I say. Used of an importunate school-girl slobbering over her infatuate



"The little column wound out of its pretty fastness and began to head East by North."

*Frank Schaefer*

sire, it may be appropriate—if inclined to make the gorge rise: but in the present connection it's insulting, indecent, and idiotic. 'Coax!' What does it mean? 'Persuade by blandishment.' Jacob's Ramp! We're not dealing with the Babes in the Wood. How the devil can you coax five horse-power of roach-backed vice if it doesn't like the look of the road? Promise to tell it a story? Or swear there's a fairy pub at the top of the hill? You know, I'm not going to change hats with the swine. We're not going to be on those sort of terms. If they behave themselves, I'll—I'll let

them follow me. I'll also prepare their food and perform their filthy toilet. But if they try to put it across me—well, that's where little 'Erbert gets off. I'm not going to bicker with a mule. I've had enough of the Art of Uselessness. Besides, it's

dangerous. I'm rather particular about my abdominal wall—I don't want it bent."

"Now, don't look for trouble," said Patricia, wiping her eyes. "Balak and Balaam are as quiet as lambs. I can't

"Pat," said Eulalie, laughing, "don't sympathise with him. If we'd told him to carry the compass, he'd 've said we were asking his death. If we'd said we had no job for him, he'd 've clamoured for something to do. He is contrary—for the love of the thing."

"Yet he's an asset," said Simon, folding his map. "He's obstructive, subversive and he's wasted our last half-hour. Yet we aren't angry. Why is it?"

Pomfret shrugged his shoulders and waved a hand.



"Personality," he said. "That indefinable charm, which all envy and so few possess. But don't be down-hearted. We can't all have it. And now what about a final beer before we flirt with Sleep? As a precaution, I mean."

He rose and strolled to the doorway, calling for Jeanne.

"This morning," said Simon, "Pomfret

say I'll take them to-morrow, because I want to help Simon, but it's nothing to do."



walked twelve miles and loathed them. He walked to Bethune and back. D'you know what he went for?"

"He said," said Patricia, "he wanted some cigarettes."

Simon nodded.

"I know. But he could have bought them in Esteppemazan. No. He went for a couple of eye-fringes. You know. Things you put on a brow-band to keep the flies away. They make quite a lot of difference to the comfort of any horse—or mule."

\* \* \* \* \*

If you must search for a country, I imagine Simon's plan was as good as any other.

The four moved slowly, covering thirty miles in the week. Three days out of seven they marched, and rested on four. When it was necessary they camped, but more often than not they spent the night at an inn. This was convenient—gave body and soul a chance. The four grabbed at it. . . . So the men were always spruce, and the girls dainty. The latter might have worn breeches and let their finger-nails go. They found it unnecessary to do either. They dressed as they had dressed to play golf, and could have passed through a lounge at any hour without exciting anything but admiration. They were, of course, essentially feminine: but, if they looked at themselves in mountain pools, they also bathed in them. Little wonder that their natural beauty came to be that of the wild. Yet they were least of all savage: clean linen went on to their backs every day. Murillo and other villages had to return their washing in thirty-six hours. While protesting that this was impossible, they did it in twenty-four and exhibited it privately for twelve as one exhibits to one's neighbours transient miracles not ever likely again to pass their way.

Simon directed the reconnaissance and indeed conducted most of it himself, with Patricia for A.D.C. He carried the compass and wore the binocular, mapping the country as he went. His wife worked with her husband, with shining eyes. Pomfret victualled the party and controlled the transport, contentedly marching before his beloved mules and cross-examining such natives as he met regarding the lie of the land. He was seldom in sight of the Beau-lieux: sometimes they and he were a good two miles apart. This necessitated liaison, which Eulalie delighted to maintain with considerable skill.

As the days went by, experience came to teach them a hundred tricks. A code of emergency signals by flag or whistle was evolved: Pomfret found a new way of loading the mules: Simon learned how to make the most of a brook: in a week they could pitch a camp in half an hour.

Gay and keen and careless, I fancy the sight of them gladdened many an eye.

To take them at random one day in August at noon—a glorious summer day, when the sun is high in the heaven and that is without a cloud, when the mountains are flaunting their exquisite grey-green livery of the colour of church-yard oak and a haze, a tremulous haze conjures the world below into a kingdom of dreams. Her broad-brimmed hat by her side, Eulalie is lying prone on a slice of turf: her pert chin is cupped in her palms and the outline of her slight figure is plainly visible—a lithe and supple business, with a natural waist and, below, such a pair of silk-stockinged legs as Amaryllis herself might have been proud to display. Under the brave sunshine her wonderful red-gold hair has turned into a muster of tones of unbelievable beauty. The ground falls before her in one tremendous leap to just such another aerie a crow's mile away. There sits Simon, with his elbows planted on his knees and his glasses up to his eyes. His shirt is open at the throat, his sleeves are rolled to the elbow, and his soft hat is tilted to the back of his head. His lips are moving as he describes with great particularity a peak that shall serve as a landmark next time they pass this way. Cross-legged by his side, his wife takes down his words in a soldier's note-book and, when he stops speaking, raises her lovely head to follow his gaze across the gorges. Then Simon lowers his glasses, and the two sit like statues, with their heads up, steady-eyed, looking unto the hills. Boy and girl, man and woman, god and goddess. . . . Sitting thus on a throne of Nature's above the world, they are neither the one nor the other, I think, but an alloy of all three. About the third figure which Eulalie can see there is no such doubt. He is of the good red earth earthy. At the moment he is beside a bridle-path three hundred feet below and half a mile to the left, and he is addressing two mules who stare stolidly upon him and blink and occasionally turn their heads to send a fly packing. His hat, like Simon's, is on the back of his head, and he is seated upon a great stone, with

one hand raised to decorate a period and the other holding a beer-bottle, as a marshal should hold his baton, against his thigh. And from time to time he begs the mules to excuse him and puts the bottle to his lips. . . . Five minutes later they are gone, all four, and the landscape is the poorer.

Their camps were peaceful.

They never forgot their fifth—the fairest of all. They found a fold of the mountains where a spring rose out of a thicket and meadows on either side sloped to the sky. The place might have been a crater which Time had begged of the gods, when he was a child, to plant a garden there.

The *toile* tents went up upon natural terraces, one on each side of the burn: a fire-place was built on the bank, a fire was kindled and the mule lines laid out thirty paces or so down stream: then stones were moved and packed to make a pool, and the canvas bath was sunk to 'tile' its floor: a ground-sheet, spread on the bank and hanging down like a table-cloth into the water, completed the *salle des bains*.

Close to Nature that night, they slept like the dead. That their quarters were close did not concern them at all. They were of the same kind. This was as well, for Eulalie's curls were brushing Patricia's arm, thrusting out of its hammock, and Pomfret, who lay on the ground, had Simon suspended above him twelve inches away. The tents were open and full of the mountain breeze, a winking huddle of ash showed where the fire had been, away in the shadows the mules were lying down. There was rest in the place—they had never done that before.

The men were up at dawn. By arrangement, they were free of the bath-room till six o'clock; then they awakened the girls and withdrew to watch the approaches to the dingle, so that Patricia and Eulalie could bathe and dress undisturbed—idyllic rites fit for the brush of a Watteau, redolent of the whimper of the hounds of Actæon. Presently came breakfast and, since they were not to push on until the following day, leisure for all. The mules were suffered to graze, Pomfret to sleep, Simon to climb to the lip of the cup that held them, lazily rake the country and pick up his points. Patricia and Eulalie compared their bygone days, discussing men and manners as women will.

So for one summer's day and another night.

Then the tents were struck, the bath came out of the pool, and half an hour later the

little column wound out of its pretty fastness and began to head East by North.

And of such was their life.

The weather was set fair, they and their beasts were in the best of health, the stepping-stones which Simon indicated never gave way. There was always room in the inn and always brushwood and water by the camp. They never were far behind time and they met with no misadventure.

All things considered, their luck was remarkable.

When he was alone with his mules, Pomfret looked down his nose. He had seen this good fortune before.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Now, that's a landmark if you like," said Simon, "of the Once-seen-never-forgotten type. The pity is it won't be the slightest use—for our next lap, any way. We'll be on the other side of those." He pointed to a long ridge of frowning crags. "Never mind. Shove it down. You never know. *Hill like a leaning churn—waterfall leaping from summit gives exact impression of being poured out. Bearing . . .*" He stooped to peer at the compass. "*Absolutely plumb North.*"

"Right," said Patricia. "Isn't there anything you can get on the other side?"

"Nothing," said Simon, putting his glasses to his eyes. "*Series of ridges*, if you like, but there's nothing to choose. It's nondescript chaos and, I rather imagine, wicked country to cross. But that's to be seen. Never mind. Landmarks are only a convenience. If you hold your compass tight you can't go wrong."

He put his glasses away and rose to his feet.

Down in the valley below Eulalie rose also.

Simon lifted his hat and waited for her to do the same: but the slim white figure stood still.

"Hullo," said Patricia. "What's up?"

Simon repeated his signal two or three times.

Eulalie never moved.

Simon replaced his hat.

Out went Eulalie's hand with a wisp of white in its fingers.

"*Trouble with the mules*," said Simon. "Hell." The wisp fluttered to the ground. "*Need you*. Well, we must count ourselves lucky not to have had it before." He repeated the signal and turned. "Come on, my darling."

But Patricia was already descending.



"This way," she cried over her shoulder.

To get to where Eulalie stood proved less simple than it had seemed. Right at the beginning of their descent the girl had been lost to view, and the two were continually balked by short but sheer drops which had to be circumvented, with the result that, when at last they were down, they were not in the valley at all, but standing on a patch of greensward, with the rough of the mountains on three sides and a wood on the fourth. For a moment they were uncertain which way to turn: then they got their direction and bore to the left. . . .

Twenty minutes later they were back upon the patch of greensward.

When they had exchanged irritation—

"My dear," said Simon, "there's only one thing to do, and that is to go back to the top and start again. It's my own fool's fault for not looking where I was going when I was coming down."

"Well, I'm not exactly blameless," rejoined his wife. "I went first nearly the whole of the way. However . . ."

The ascent took them nearly an hour.

Eulalie was no longer to be seen, but that was hardly surprising: she had probably joined Pomfret. The two could see where she had stood and the way to get there.

After noting the line to follow with meticulous care, they made their second descent, pointing out to each other where they had gone wrong before. Presently they came to a wood and five minutes later they emerged upon the patch of greensward.

Patricia recoiled, and Simon put a hand to his head.

Then with one accord they began to laugh.

"My dear, your face," sobbed Patricia. "Your face when you recognised it. . . ."

She slid an arm round his neck and clung to him helplessly.

"It's so silly," said Simon weakly. "Sweatin' right up to the top jus' to retrace our steps. . . . An' Pomfret in straits with the mules, cursing us neck an' crop for being so long." He glanced at his watch. "An' a quarter past two, as I live. M' dear, we must break away somehow."

"But we've tried every way," said Patricia.

This was true. The greensward lay four-square in a little dell, and they had entered or left it by each of its definite sides.

"We must steer by compass," said Simon. "It'll be a tedious business because we're so much enclosed. But we've got to get out."

It was more than tedious, and when, after scrambling and halting alternately for three-quarters of an hour, they passed behind a boulder to see the patch of greensward lying, quiet and reposeful, some twenty-five feet below, Simon took off his hat and mopped his face.

"Place is bewitched," he said. "I know I've been steering badly, but I've kept between North and North-East all the time. How d'you reconcile that?"

"I can't," said Patricia. "I don't think anyone could. As you say, the place is bewitched. And now we're reduced to the duffer's exit—going back by the way we've come. We're bound to get out like that because I've got the bearings written down."

"That's right," said Simon resignedly. "It's rather like sealing an envelope with Portland cement, but if everything else gives way. . . . But oh, my pretty lady, you will be so tired."

"Don't you believe it," said his wife. "That bath this morning nearly killed me—I could have cried with pain—but I can't shake off its effect."

"Great heart," said Simon and kissed her.

Then they retraced their steps to the top of the hill. . . .

Two hours later they struck the bridle-path and, following this for a mile, came upon the scene of disorder which Eulalie had reported.

Sullen, bored, ignoring the toothsome herbage a yard from their heads, Balak and Balaam were standing across the path, pictures of wintry discontent. Their packs were gone, and the kit which had composed them was piled by the side of the way. With the leading rein round his wrist, Pomfret was lying on his back on a strip of turf, while Eulalie was seated on a tent with her back to a shoulder of rock, smoking a cigarette.

As the Beaulieus approached she started to her feet.

"My dears," she cried, "where on all this earth have you been?"

Pomfret rose to a sitting posture.

"Are you whole?" he said. "Got all your feet and everything?"

"We are complete and intact," said Simon.

Pomfret inspired.

"Well, don't rush about so," he said.

"Half a mile down hill in five hours is bad for the heart—my heart. In fact, I

shouldn't come next time. Let me be kicked to death."

"We lost our way," said Patricia. "I'll leave it there for the moment, because it's too mad a tale. And, besides, you'd only argue, and we're quite late enough."

"But, Pat," said Eulalie, "I've been all over the place, whistling and calling till at last my mouth wouldn't work. I've been up to where I saw you and——"

"You haven't!" cried the two in a breath.

"I have indeed. I stood on the cairn you made——"

"We never made a cairn there," cried Simon. "Nor's anyone else. There is no cairn. You've been up on the wrong hill."

Eulalie stared.

"But, my dear, I stood——"

"There was no cairn," said Patricia.

"That's right," said Pomfret. "Argue about a rotten heap of stones. Dispute as to who should have the palm for idiocy. Nice lot of broken reeds you are. Talk about an eye to country. Why, you can't walk straight. That's your trouble. Half a blinkin' mile in five hours, an' the other swarms up the wrong hill. Ugh. You're only fit to play musical chairs."

This unmerited outburst provoked a storm of indignation. Pomfret was reviled and menaced and unfavourably compared and reviled again.

Finally——

"And now what's the matter?" concluded Simon. "We haven't loafed fifteen miles out of our way to be abused. If you hadn't messed things up and had to signal——"

"Remove that man," said Pomfret excitedly. "Take him out of earshot and let him find his own way back. That'll give me time to recover."

"Don't be silly," said Patricia, laughing. "And don't let's curse one another any more. No one's to blame. It's just bad luck. When Pomfret's heard our story——"

"Sweetheart," said Pomfret, rising, "I can't wait till then. If a child nearly gets run over, its mother will knock it about. Why? To teach it to be more careful? No. *Because she loves it.* By jeopardising her happiness the brat has scared her stiff: she retorts by assault. Her intense relief at its safety has to be served." He put her hand to his lips. "So you must forgive me. I've had my heart in my mouth most of the day. That beautiful

red-haired child absented herself for two hours."

"When I came back you threw stones at me," said Eulalie. "But you never kissed my hand."

"Yes, but you're unrepentant," said Pomfret. "Besides, you threw them back."

"And now," said Simon, "what about getting on? It's a quarter past five, and we should have been at Stelthe by three. What's the matter with the mules?"

"Heaven knows," said Pomfret bitterly. "I think the brutes are bewitched. The trouble began a couple of furlongs back. All of a sudden the leading rein left my hand. Well, I thought I'd dropped it, but when I turned round to pick it up, the swine were standing still. I stared at them for a moment, and they stared back—with the funniest look in their eyes. Then they swung round."

"I just got the rein in time. . . ."

"To describe the engagement in detail would take too long. Enough that the Queensberry Rules were ignored in the most barefaced manner, that the best part of a cubit has been added to each of my arms, that my dismemberment was attempted and that if I had not leapt for safety on to Balak's neck we shouldn't be as far as we are. He whipped up here in an effort to get me off, with Balaam hammering behind. Well, I was just wondering whether it wouldn't have been wiser to be dismembered instead of halved when the peach stopped dead. So did I—about twenty yards further on. Upon reflection, I'm not at all certain I didn't die while I was in the air. All the symptoms of death were present during my passage, which seemed interminable. Besides, I fell into yon bramble-bush, and intimacy with that luxuriant shrub would resurrect a mummy. It was really quite interesting. I've never been so placed. To lie still was unthinkable because my weight was being taken by about five thousand thorns: yet the slightest motion meant mutilation. All the time between my screams I could hear the mules laughing. . . ."

He stopped to wipe his forehead.

"But for the snakes," he continued, "I should have been there now. Apparently it was their bush. Of course, I didn't know that. I certainly heard the hissing, but I couldn't think what it was. Yes, it is funny, isn't it? Never mind. At last I saw one and left . . . simultaneously . . . all in one movement. It's wonderful what a shock will

do. That's what you call a triumph of mind over body. Then Eulalie appeared just in time to see Balaam roll. . . . The pack rather cramped his style, but he persevered, and after a while the picnic-basket went. The rest was easy. He just got up and shook himself, and the stuff fell off him in lumps.

"Well, there was nothing to be done. I sent Eulalie for you and sat down and prayed for death. Suddenly I heard the sound of cloth being torn. I looked up to see Balaam with a bit of tent in his mouth." He threw up despairing hands. "I tell you, the swine are possessed. "That wall-eyed skunk"—he pointed a shaking finger—"was deliberately attempting to off-load Balak. . . . That was too much, so I interfered with a hammock-stand. The net result of my interference was that I fell over the picnic-basket, suffered an excruciating abrasion of the tibia or shin-bone, let Balaam go and lost the hammock-stand by throwing in a ravine. When I got back, Balak's pack was off and he was going through the linen-bag. I imagine he was searching for my underwear. Well, there you are. I've tried to repack them, but you might as well try to drench a rogue-elephant with a soup-plate. Eulalie'll bear me out."

"It's perfectly true," said that lady weakly. "He tried for two solid hours while I held them. I don't think I ever laughed so much in all my life." She covered her eyes and began to shake helplessly. "He was really wonderful," she wailed. "When Balak stood on his foot he didn't shout or anything. He just touched the brute on the shoulder and when it looked round—which it did—pointed to its hoof. I thought I should die. . . . And then Balaam kicked him when he was bending down. . . . All he said was 'No vulgarity, please.' I tell you, I nearly died."

Pomfret shrugged his shoulders.

"It was reaction," he said. "I'm past swearing. And now shall we all four try? Or would you rather watch me do the goat-walk? It's very funny. I just lift up a pack-saddle and stagger about after a mule with it. When I can't carry it any more I put it down and the mule stops."

"First," said Simon, "let me apologise. There isn't one man in ten thousand who would have hung on, and I take my hat right off. I've had some."

"Thank you," said Pomfret, "thank you. But you're quite wrong. You haven't

had any at all. This is the real thing. And now shall we prove that?" He turned to Eulalie. "My dear, hold Balak, will you? Just as a matter of form. And Pat'll hold dear Balaam while Simon and I just pop his saddle on." He approached his nose to that of the last-named mule. "And if you so much as lift your cloven hoof, you loose-lipped, goose-rumped swab-b-b, I'll put a quart of pebbles to every pint of corn and you shan't have any rock-salt."

Possibly the threat weighed with him, for Balaam suffered himself to be laden without active protest, although he watched the operation with the tail of an eye which was bright with suspicion, frequently laid back his ears and occasionally switched his tail with the air of one who is hard put to it to restrain his impatience of a hostile act.

Balak submitted likewise, only once lifting a leg, when he was immediately discouraged by such a burst of minatory invective from his loaders that, after half-heartedly addressing Pomfret's whereabouts, he restored it to the ground and fell to endeavouring to disengage his mouth from the bit—an essay which was patently futile and so within the law, but involved facial contortion of a repulsive kind.

It was now six o'clock, and Stelthe was three miles away.

"At least, I believe it is," said Simon. "But I can't swear to that and I'm not too sure of the way. You see, I expected to go on steering up above. But that's out of the question."

"Well, we've got to stick to the path," said Eulalie.

"I know," said Simon. "What bothers me is that it bears so much to the left." He pulled out the compass and set it down on the ground. "No. That's all right. East with a taste of North. Funny how one loses one's sense of direction sometimes." He put the compass away and rose to his feet. "All ready?" he said.

As if in answer, Balaam went backward, taking Patricia with him. . . .

Stelthe was won at half-past eleven o'clock in blinding rain.

There was no difficulty at all about finding the village: the bridle-path led them right into its ill-smelling street: neither was the way steep, nor the going severe: and the distance was less than three miles. But the mules disputed every blistering yard. . . .

Of course, Stelthe was asleep, and since there were no lamps, it took them a quarter of an hour to find the inn. When found, this

proved inhospitable. They were actually asked to go away. This they refused to do, and in the end, because of their importunity, a slattern opened the door and let them inside. Asked where the stable was, she professed not to know. They bribed her desperately to learn that it was two streets away.

Simon and Pomfret found it and roused a man who insisted from a first-floor window first that there was no stable, then that it was not in his charge and finally that there was no room. When they offered him five francs, he demanded ten. There was nothing to do but comply, whereupon he left the loft and opened the door. By the time the mules had been wisped, watered, fed and bedded down it was one o'clock.

At the inn misery reigned. There were only two bedrooms, the beds were damp, food, firing and liquor had all been declared unavailable. This was too much—a saint would have seen red. . . .

Pomfret forced the cellar while Simon contrived to kindle the kitchen fire. From then on conditions improved. The men got up fuel and food, a bottle of decent brandy and a bucket of milk. Wet clothes were changed for dry, a meal was prepared, a table was drawn to the blaze, and the four made a mighty breakfast rounded with a bowl of punch. Finally, when the bedding had been aired, the Beaulieus and Eulalie retired, leaving Pomfret stretched luxuriously before the hearth.

So for three hours.

Then the host and hostess came down.

It took quite a long time to wake Pomfret, and when at last he was roused he was not at all pleased. This was but natural. He could have slept the clock round. Acidly he demanded what was required of him. He was immediately and excitedly informed that he would have to pay for a new door to the cellar, that firewood cost eighty francs a metre, that five bottles of brandy were missing, that two frying-pans had been destroyed, that to replace these would cost at least seventy francs, that help, for which he must pay, would be necessary to clean the kitchen, and finally that he must instantly rise, discharge his just debt and go.

"Very good," said Pomfret. "That's a most interesting statement. I wouldn't have missed it for worlds. And now I'm going to sleep. The next person who wakes me had better get to his knees, for as there's a heaven above I'll break his neck."

With that he lay down and instantly fell asleep.

Amazed, enraged, but undisguisedly daunted, his hearers withdrew to the yard to consult in furious whispers and command the sympathy of neighbours who, upon the advice of the slattern, were beginning to arrive. During a lull in the indignation someone suggested that the baker, who owned most of the village and was therefore generally disliked, should be attracted to the scene, kept in ignorance of the facts and then dared to disturb the stranger before the fire, but the sudden appearance of the baker, who was of small stature and had been standing behind the speaker, rendered the suggestion impracticable. The idea of rousing one of the other guests and desiring him or her to rouse Pomfret was better received. Accordingly the host and hostess and rather more of their friends than could conveniently do so repaired *en masse* to the passage on the first floor. They began with the single room, which was occupied by Eulalie. When he had knocked for five minutes the host essayed to enter, but the door was fastened. After further consultation they turned to the other door, but, before they could knock, this was opened, and Simon passed out and closed it behind him.

For a moment he regarded the posse with a cold and glassy eye. Then—

"Good morning," he said. "I don't remember giving orders that I was to be called at six."

There was an embarrassed silence.

At length the hostess gave tongue.

"Monsieur's friend is below. He is asleep before the fire. One cannot approach at all. It is most inconvenient."

"Then wake him."

"Monsieur, we have tried, but in vain. Perhaps if he was touched. . . . But it was not for us to touch the gentleman. If Monsieur will descend. . . ."

"I see," said Simon shortly. "Anything else?"

The woman swallowed violently.

The trouble was she could have spared her audience. She had sworn publicly to reduce Simon, and Simon was publicly reducing her.

Something had to be done.

"Monsieur will excuse me," she mouthed, "but these rooms are taken, and——"

"I know," said Simon. "I've taken them. What about it?"

The hag boggled.

"But certainly. It is true—for last night. But to-day at noon. . . . I am extremely sorry, but if Monsieur could make other arrangements. . . ."

Simon leaned against the door.

"Listen," he said. "This bedroom is above the kitchen, of which the ceiling is thin. I heard you rouse my friend and I heard what he said, and let me assure you he is a man of his word. So also am I. And now listen very carefully, for I shall not repeat myself. In an hour's time you will send to your stable to water and feed my two mules: at mid-day you will come to this room with four cans of very hot water and four of cold and knock on the door. At one you will serve dinner for four—an omelet, two ducks, cheese, butter, bread and fruit and plenty of beer. If you disobey in the slightest particular, I shall report to the Customs at Rouge that *under the wood in your cellar I counted five bales of boots.*"

There was an awful silence.

Spanish boots find high favour in France, but the duty is quite prohibitive. Of course, if . . .

Simon raised his eyebrows.

"It is understood?" he said.

At the third attempt—

"It is understood, Monsieur," said his hostess.

Simon nodded and re-entered his room.

\* \* \* \* \*

If Fate is against you it is an excellent thing to take the sweep by the throat. But if you cannot soon choke him into submission, after a while your fingers will begin to ache.

It was not so much that things continued to go wrong. They were wrong.

Stelthe was a poisonous village—drab at its best, and at its worst squalid. The people were surly and malevolent, the children filthy and ill-mannered, the beasts vicious. As for the atmosphere of the inn, that became hourly more detestable: hatred, malice and all uncharitableness mowed and gibbered in the sanbenito of fear.

Yet the four dared not go.

For one thing, it rained steadily, and any sort of a roof was better than none: for another, the mules were sick. They ate their headropes listlessly, but they would touch little else. Pomfret dosed them, let no one feed them but himself, watered them patiently, exercised them with a devotion only comparable with that of an infatuate spinster to a moribund pug, and was kicked

and struck and bitten for his pains. The brutes were mentally and physically sick.

Plug, the next village which lay on their route, was fourteen miles distant from Stelthe. Simon walked there and back in the day and confirmed the general suspicion that they could not at present proceed in that direction.

"It's twenty-two miles by road, there's no bridle-path and the going is wicked. No mule could ever get there—except by road. The village is frightening—fifty times worse than this. There's only one pub and that has no bedrooms or stabling, and doesn't even sell food. It's simply a tenth-rate bar. There are two or three places where we could camp all right, but we'd never get the mules to one of them. Half the time you'd be glad of an ice-axe. I think we'd better turn South."

He did so the following day, taking Patricia with him.

For the first three miles the way was easy enough, though the country was blind and steering a difficult business. In vain they sought for some point they had made a landmark, but though Simon digressed two miles to win the top of a ridge, even The Leaning Churn defied detection. As if to mock them, a new unforgettable form loomed on their right—a mass shaped like a beehive, with a mighty head of water welling out of its side. Indeed, its resemblance to a skep was supernatural: there was no flaw in its symmetry, and the cavern from which the waterfall seemed to emerge could not have been more appropriately situated if it had been an entrance for gigantic bees. For what it was worth the two made a note of its lay, but the country around was big, and it seemed unlikely that it would prove of any more value as a landmark than had The Leaning Churn. As they went on, the line began to grow worse, and it soon became painfully clear that to bring the mules this way was out of the question. In desperation they sought for a bridle-path, but there was none to be found. They laboured on for four miles, casting to right and left, before they turned, but it was now quite evident that they had entered the same bleak, heart-breaking tract which had so much discouraged Simon the day before, and apparently lay in a crescent East and South of Stelthe.

That night in the larger bedroom another council was held.

To turn North seemed idle. That way led to a rail-head in ten short miles by road

If Etchechuria was anywhere, it was clearly not North of Stelthe.

"Well, let's go back," said Pomfret. "I'm sure we've come wrong. Ever since Estepemazan the beer's got steadily worse. It wasn't too good at Murillo: here it makes me feel sick; and at Plug there isn't any."

"I'm inclined to agree," said Simon. "Not because of the beer, but because, to tell you the truth, I don't know what else to do. But we can't start off right away. For one thing, look at the mules."

"I know you don't mean that as an exhortation," said Pomfret, "but oblige me next time by using some other phrase. Say 'Consider the mules,' or 'The mules are indisposed,' or 'To carry the mules would be beyond our power.' Anything but 'Look at the mules.' This is now the end or terminus of the third fly-blown day upon which I have spent the whole of my waking hours looking at the mules. I've looked at them from every angle. I've looked at them from above, I've looked underneath them and I've tried to look inside them. I know every blemish—and there are millions—upon their evil-smelling hides. I should think their vile image is indelibly stamped upon the retinas of my eyes. In fact, I believe I'm beginning to absorb some of their characteristics. I was on the edge of biting Eulalie at lunch—only she looked round."

"Secondly," said Simon, laughing, "I want to go over those last few miles again. We got here all right, but rather by accident. If it hadn't been for the path——"

"You used the compass," said Patricia. "Don't you remember?"

"I know. But I'd like to do that bit again—over the hills. It's only about three miles, and it'll complete our line. And then perhaps we could find a better camp. Our last wasn't anything wonderful. And from there we might turn South. Any way, I want to make a reconnaissance if only to regain my prestige."

"You've never lost it," said Eulalie.

"You're very lenient," said Simon. "Let me say 'self-respect.' That bit of country beat me all ends up. I thought I had a sense of direction. I thought if you showed me a girl standing three hundred feet from where I stood and told me to join her, and that in country about as difficult as St. James's Park—well, to be honest, I thought I could do it. Finally, if I wanted to avoid a lawn about the size

of a tennis-court and you gave me the whole of Europe to miss it in—well, I believed that also to be within my powers. So I propose to go back and either confirm or refute the suspicion of gross incompetence which lies heavy upon my soul."

"I'm going with you," said Eulalie. "I thought if you showed me a hill fifty paces away and asked me to climb it to the exclusion of other hills—well, I thought I could comply with the request. Are you certain there wasn't a cairn?"

"I know there wasn't," said Patricia. "Besides, if you could get up, how was it we couldn't get down? And of course I'm coming too. If you must walk into a maze—well, three stand a better chance of emerging alive."

"Attractive as it sounds," said Pomfret, "I'm afraid I can't come. You see, I must, er, look at the mules. More. I beg you won't start before nine. I've sent for a vet.—a local wallah who is credited, most probably in error, with an ability to diagnose, if not to cure, the various diseases which mules are heir to. And he's going to, er, look at the mules at half-past eight. Well, rich as is my vocabulary, I fear that possibly some of the medical terms may momentarily confuse my ear, and as, in my humble opinion, no effort should be spared, not only to put the swine on their legs, but also to encourage them to beat down Satan under their feet, perhaps one of you three will attend. And here and now let me say that I quite agree with Patricia about the maze, and I think it's asking for trouble to dodder round there again. There's something the matter with that vicinity. It's been a battle-field or a place where lunatics are interred or something. I went all goose-flesh two or three times. And then—if you must have it—look at the mules. Their little brain-storm burst a stone's throw away. I tell you, there's something in the air about that spot. It's been over-manured or something. And what about that hill like a churn? That was enough to frighten any God-fearing man. Why, you could almost read the name of the dairy on it. . . . As for your sense of direction, that's as sound as a bell in a bucket of bran: it's your sense of proportion that's warped. You can't have a bright blue sky every day in the year or a marble hall to dwell in every night."

"But the compass betrays me," said Simon. "The day we got here I thought I was heading East: well, I was nearer

South. To-day again I thought I was facing South, and I looked at the compass to find I was past South-West."

Pomfret shrugged his shoulders.

"There may be iron about. You never know. And that would deflect the needle. Any way . . ."

Sitting back in the shadow, Simon repressed a start and, after hearing further discussion in which he took no part, rose to his feet and drove the others to bed.

When Patricia was asleep he switched on the light and got out paper and pencil and compass and notes and maps. . . .

Half an hour later he knelt by the side of the bed and kissed his wife out of a dream.

Patricia started up.

"What is it?" she breathed.

Simon was speaking in a curiously vibrant tone.

"I've a secret," he said, "and it's rather too hot to hold. But you mustn't tell the others—just yet."

"Simon! You don't mean . . .?"

"I think so. Supposing The Leaning Churn and The Skep were tremendous lodestones—giant magnets. . . . What then? Get the wrong side of them and they'll throw any compass out—pull your holy needle all over the shop. My dear, I may be wrong, but *I think they've done it twice . . . once the day we got here and again to-day.* And now let me put it this way. Madeira's an island, isn't it? All alone in the midst of the sea? Well, if you stuck lodestones all round it and did your job well, until some sailor or other tumbled to what you'd done, Madeira 'd be off the map. No ship could ever make it. *In fact, I shouldn't be surprised if it came to be called 'The Lost Island.'* You can steer by the sun and the stars, but I'm washing them out because, if you come to think, we haven't seen the sky since we sighted The Leaning Churn."

\* \* \* \* \*

The vet. was pleasant, if downright.

The moment he saw his patients he threw up his hands.

"I trust," he said, "that you have not paid much for these mules."

"Quite enough," said Pomfret. "Why?"

"Because no one in this part of the world would have paid anything at all. This particular breed has only one fault, Monsieur: but that fault is a fatal fault—in a mule. You cannot be sure of them for a quarter of an hour. You may buy them at two o'clock and at ten minutes past two they will be useless. So long as they are well there is no other kind to touch them for strength and good temper. But when they go wrong they are finished. One can do nothing—*nothing*. They will never recover. It is believed to be an affection of the brain. I am sorry, Messieurs and Mesdames, but I cannot help you at all. I am sure they were excellent once. But now they are not worth their halters. If you take my advice you will drag them out of the village and let them go. They are called Etchechurian mules."

"ETCHECHURIAN!"

"That's right. There is a legend that originally they came from Etchechuria—'The Lost Country.' But that is all nonsense, of course."

Trying to keep her voice steady—

"Is it cruelty to use them?" said Patricia.

The surgeon shrugged his shoulders.

"It is not cruelty, Madame, if they will let you. You mean you want to get away? Well, if you are leaving this morning I can give them each an injection before you start. That may enable you to load them, but . . ." He turned to Pomfret. "Has Monsieur far to go?"

"No," said Simon uncertainly. "Only about three miles."

*The fourth episode in this series will appear in the next number.*





A "RONDO" FRIEZE IN THE WOODS AT CAP D'ANTIBES, SOUTH OF FRANCE.

# THE MODERN DEVELOPMENT IN DANCING

MARGARET MORRIS AND HER SCHOOL

By FRED DANIELS

*Photographs by the Author*

THE outstanding feature of the Margaret Morris School of Dancing is the remarkable co-ordination obtained between physical and mental training.

A perfect physique is nothing without the co-ordinating development of the mind, without the expression of the human as a creative organism rather than the elementary expression of physical fitness alone.

Physical exercise, Margaret Morris saw clearly, could not produce its full benefits unless it was designed in natural harmony with mental exercise. She realised that her pupils should be happy, that they should really want to do their work, the motive coming from within and not from a source outside themselves. To achieve this in practice is given only to a teacher capable of inspiring creative enthusiasm

and instilling into the minds of the pupils a desire to excel, because excellence is a fine thing in itself and an object to achieve. With what success Margaret Morris has produced this harmony between mental and physical development, between work and happiness, this co-ordination so necessary to all constructive work and pioneer effort, a visit to her school and a glimpse of the pupils at their work will readily show. The absorbing interest which is displayed in what are too often made tasks of care and imposition, and the obvious spontaneity of the pupils' efforts to achieve their best in their dances and other work, is the result, not of one specialised training at the expense of all others, but of a scientifically balanced development under the inspiration and force of a born teacher.



## THE FOUNDATION OF DANCING.

But Margaret Morris is not primarily an exponent of physical culture. Her aim has been to devise a perfect system of dancing. In this she has been greatly indebted to the ancient Greeks, who, without doubt, had developed a system of dancing and physical culture which produced very remarkable results, making of their people a superior race of athletes whose influence reaches us to-day through the art and sculpture of the period.

As the basis foundation of her dancing,

Thus far Margaret Morris had not hesitated to learn from the Greeks and, still further back, from the Egyptians, Chinese, and the ancient peoples of India, all that they had to teach. The human body having changed so little during the course of centuries, it would be foolish to ignore what men had learned when the human race, as some contend of ancient Greece, had reached its highest pinnacle of achievement. But a reconstruction of ancient methods would scarcely be sufficient to meet the requirements of to-day. If dancing is to be a living



PUPILS OF MARGARET MORRIS IN A GROUP FROM THE "LIGHT AND SHADOW" DANCE, THE MUSIC FOR WHICH IS BY RACHMANINOFF.

Margaret Morris has taken the fundamental positions of the old Hellenic dances which were collected, through much patient research work, by Raymond Duncan. These positions were essentially natural, and Margaret Morris has built upon them a technique that gives a perfectly normal balance and a complete control of the whole of the body, enabling the knowledge which the ancients won by centuries of effort to be utilised and brought into relation with present-day requirements.

creative art, it must be progressive, it must be a vital force whose purpose is to interpret life, to reveal and create afresh, rather than slavishly to imitate the interpretation of a dead people.

From this starting-point Margaret Morris has developed her ideas, and upon this foundation of fundamental positions she has perfected her system of dancing to an extent that has produced a technique that allows of every possible movement and a free expression in rhythm of any impression

of life that is sufficiently vivid for the dancer to record. Finding no technique in existence that would permit so full an interpretation of life, it was necessary to create one. This

other methods in vogue were worse than useless for this new technique.

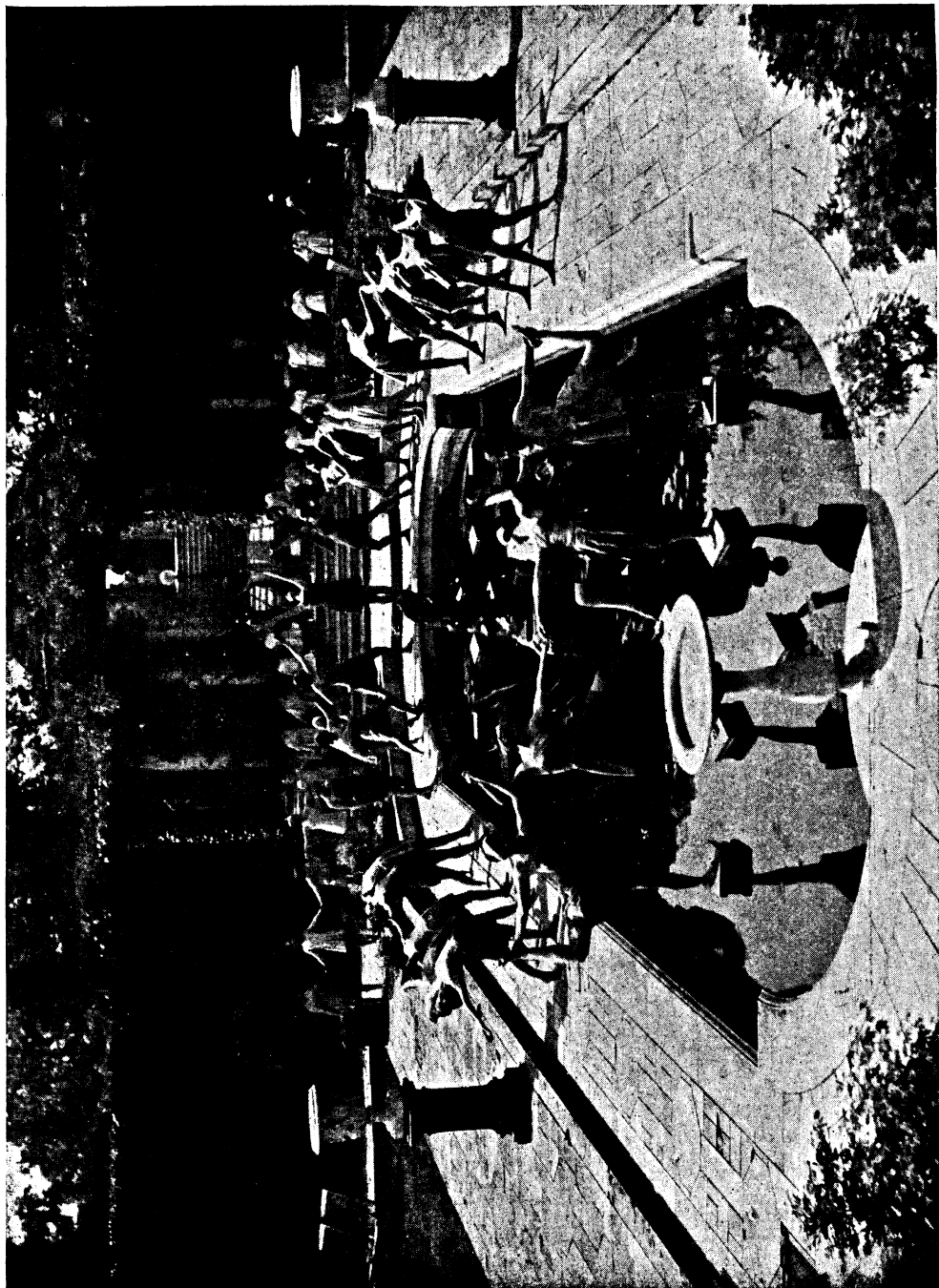
The Italian ballet school, with its eccentric convention of turning the feet out at right



MARGARET MORRIS AND HER PUPILS AT THEIR SUMMER SCHOOL IN WALES.

was, however, by no means the completion of her task, for no sooner had such a technique been evolved than it became obvious that dancers trained according to

angles and dancing upon the toes, had nothing in common with this new mode of expression. It possessed a technique of a kind, and one needing years of strenuous



PUPILS OF THE MARGARET MORRIS SCHOOL DANCING AT LORD LEVERHULME'S HOUSE AT HAMPSTEAD.

effort to perfect; but the Italian ballet dancing was artificial, and its technique a fixed and rigid mould into which all emotions were supposed to fit. Having fallen into the fatal error of cultivating technique as an end in itself—whereas it is only the means—

believe that any practised technique restricts liberty—Margaret Morris found her difficulties no less formidable.

Technique, though it be very excellent technique, is not art thereby, but only the means through which art is expressed. In



MARGARET MORRIS WORKING WITH HER TROUPE OF DANCERS AT HER SCHOOL IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

*Here she is training her "new race of dancers" along modern lines. She is shortly to open her own theatre in Paris, as in Chelsea.*

it could no longer survive as the foundation of creative dancing.

At the other extreme of the dancing world—that is, the dancers trained, or, rather, untrained, in those schools which persistently confuse freedom of expression with sentimentality and vagueness, and

itself it is not enough. It is the pathway of our endeavours, a pathway along which all must tread; but it is not the end of our journey, it is not our goal.

#### A NEW RACE OF DANCERS.

Here then was a problem. Having

created this new technique and made of it a form of expression capable of unlimited variation and infinite development, it became necessary to create a new race of dancers to perform it. Margaret Morris commenced this herculean task with a small studio of one room in Bloomsbury. Twelve years of intensive work, during which she experienced all the trials and hardships of the pioneer, have brought the Margaret Morris School to the high position of eminence which it holds in the dancing world to-day.

Her new race of dancers is now fully trained and her pupils are known the world over. She has her own theatre in Chelsea, where performances are held, and close by is the school itself where the general training and education are given. The latest development is the permanent school started last year in the South of France on the shores of the Mediterranean. This last venture is the outcome of a series of summer schools held for a period each year in some charming spot by the sea. Here the Margaret Morris training is seen at its best, for all classes are held out of doors. Margaret Morris believes that most people spend at least half the energy that should be put into their work fighting adverse conditions—and this, I think, is especially true of those doing creative work—so every opportunity is given to the pupils to work in the right “atmosphere” and under conditions as ideal as it is possible to make them. I would make special mention of the value of the free open-air life that these fortunate young people are able to lead at the summer schools as a large factor in these “ideal conditions.” Here on the sands, swept clean by winds and bathed in sunshine, the dancing classes are held under the supervision of Margaret Morris herself or of her very capable staff.

#### HARMONY OF MIND AND BODY.

If ever you are in the neighbourhood of one of the Margaret Morris Schools, ask permission to watch the dancing class. The exercises, expressing as they do to the fullest possible extent the sheer joy of life, are a revelation to those people who imagine that physical culture must of necessity mean a series of dull, uninteresting movements. There is no earthly reason why physical culture should be dull. On the contrary, to get the full benefit from anything we do we must enjoy the doing of it. Mind and body must work together in complete harmony. It is not sufficient to crawl out

of bed at the last moment and do ten minutes' dumb-bell exercises for the sake of conscience rather than because you want to do them. You are obviously not getting the benefit you should. Exercises cannot be “scientifically correct” if they are so boring that after a while you neglect to do them altogether. We are dealing with human beings, not with machines, and we need a form of exercise interesting enough in itself to occupy our minds and make us really want to perform it, quite apart from the good it may do us. That Margaret Morris has perfected such a method there can be no doubt. These exercises, full of life and colour, are graduated to suit men and women and children of all ages. Based as they are upon purely natural movements such as we get in walking, running, jumping, throwing, etc., they cannot be harmful to the most delicate, yet, developed in their more complicated rhythm, may be used with much benefit by the most vigorous of young people. Each muscle of the body is brought into play in the natural manner, and no one set of muscles is developed at the expense of the others, the whole system being so designed to produce grace and symmetry in line and movement and a well-proportioned physique.

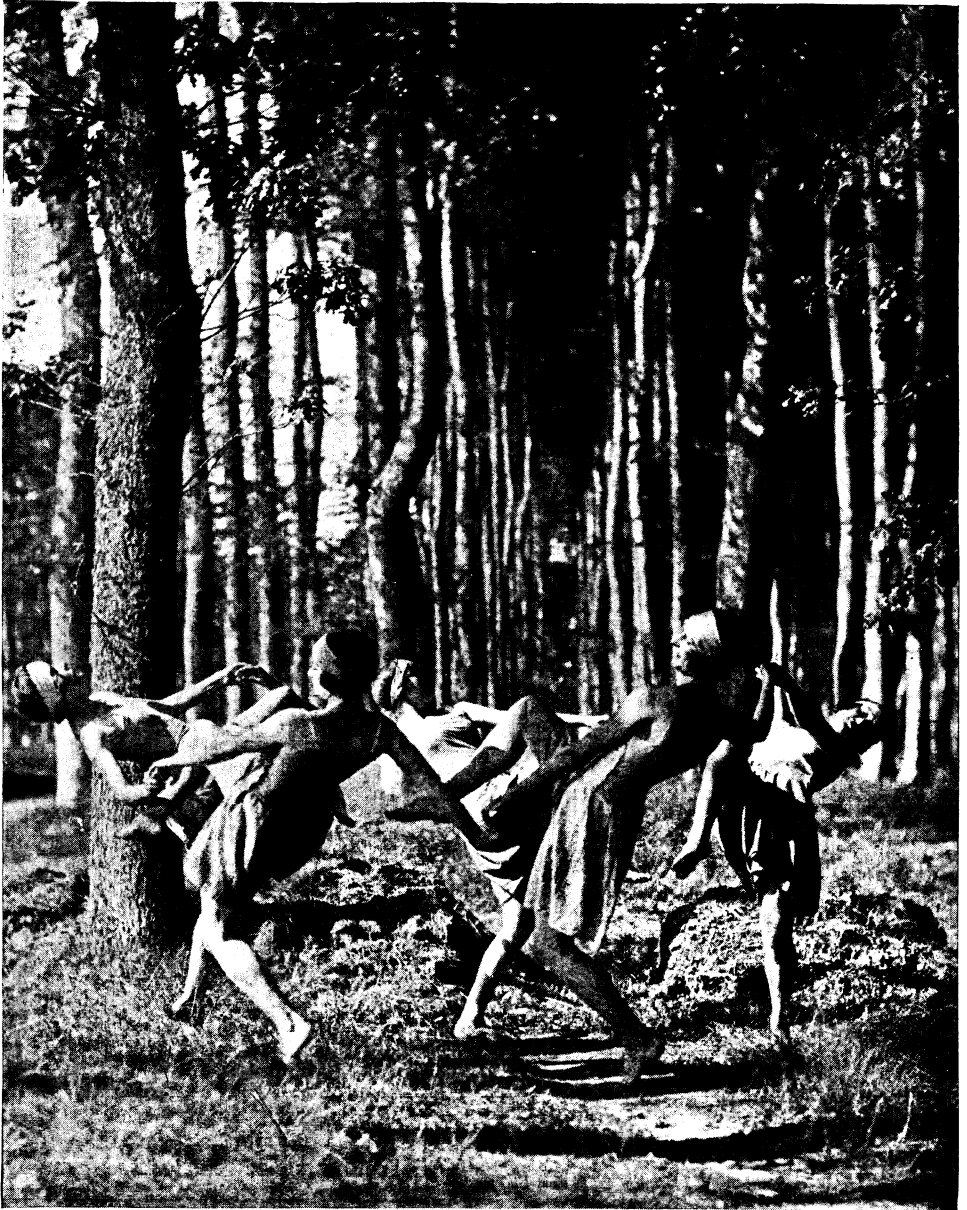
After the dancing classes the call of the sea is irresistible. A quick change is made into bathing costume, and the next half-hour or so is spent in surf bathing, swimming, and diving, in which the staff join as wholeheartedly as the pupils. After lunch (and I can assure you that appetites are good) the afternoons are given to painting, to the study of music, or other classes that require no strenuous muscular effort, while in the evenings there are lectures, debates, or ball-room dancing. In all this the pupils are given every opportunity to fill their minds with beautiful thoughts, and are taught to express them in movement, so that there is a living, ever-changing interest in their work and an unlimited scope for the mind to develop.

#### CHARACTER.

Not content with building strong, healthy bodies, Margaret Morris builds character, too. She insists that this balance is of the greatest importance, that much of the efficiency of a well-balanced body is dependent upon a well-balanced mind. To this end, besides physical training, her system of tuition includes a thorough study, along modern lines, of form, colour and design,

music and literature, and the practical application of these to the stage. It includes the designing of scenery and posters, singing and composing music, writing plays and

scenery, how to organise performances, how to discuss and to lecture, and to interview people. In all these subjects, and I think you will agree that they form a fairly full



IN THE WOODS NEAR POURVILLE, NORMANDY: A DANCE BY MARGARET MORRIS AND HER PUPILS.

poetry, and both reciting and acting them. The dancer is also taught stage production in all its branches, the arrangement of lighting and effects, the actual making of costumes and properties, the painting of

programme, care is taken not to overcrowd the pupils' minds with cold, unnecessary facts. Instead, they are taught warm principles, are helped in every way to use their own brains and to think for themselves.



This is, I think, the quintessence of an all-round educational training.

An excellent feature of the Margaret Morris method is that each pupil is made to feel that she is a vital part of the whole organisation, that her own ideas and views are important and necessary. These pupils are not only taught, but, when proficient, are taught to teach others. Margaret Morris herself will join in any practice class that happens to be under the direction of one of the pupils, and how effectively do these pupils in their turn carry out the rôle

In this way the pupils themselves help to create the conditions under which they work. Margaret Morris is very enthusiastic about these meetings, for her first concern is that the pupils should be happy in their work. It means so much to their progress, to their development, and to their whole outlook on life.

#### HAPPINESS A CREED.

Margaret Morris is a staunch advocate of happiness. She will have nothing to do with those long-faced gentlemen who make



A GROUP IN WHICH STUDENTS REPRODUCE THE RHYTHM SUGGESTED BY THE SHAPES AND LINES OF THE PALM TREES.

of teacher! Under their watchful eye, Margaret herself must be very careful that her balance is good, and that her positions conform in every way to the principles she has herself formulated.

This idea of co-operation is carried still further by a weekly general meeting of pupils and staff, for the purpose of free discussion upon the work of the school. The pupils are given every encouragement to make suggestions that might help to improve the routine of the school or its organisation.

work so little like play that children become dull. She detests anything which is merely negative or morbid, and would have us fight such paralysing influences. Happiness is her creed, and she insists that we must grow unafraid of our souls, and learn to live gladly, gaily, and thankfully, filling our lives with colour, beauty, music, dancing, art.

Living as we do to-day under conditions imposed upon us by the growth of a mechanical civilisation, these things have become a matter of paramount importance

in the development of the human race. The multitude is beginning to revolt against sordidness and gloom. Art must be more closely allied to life. Deep within us we all

sense can be developed to a very high degree. If the arts took their rightful place in the education of all classes, then our great ugly cities, with their inevitable labyrinth of



IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOSQUE: MARGARET MORRIS WITH ONE OF HER PUPILS, POSING UNDER THE SHADOW OF AN ANCIENT MOSQUE.

have an inherent craving for better conditions, a higher state of living, more beautiful homes, and Margaret Morris has proved, beyond shadow of doubt, that this artistic

slums, would no longer be tolerated, and once again the arts and crafts would regain their high place among the people. Margaret Morris is a pioneer who has raised



the standard of revolt, and her school is a living example of what education can mean.

#### MODERN BALLROOM DANCING.

Dancing promotes joy, health, grace of movement, and creates confidence in oneself. Because of these things, dancing must not be chained to the stage. Every facility must be given to allow it to enter more completely into the everyday life of the people, and though it may not be possible for us all to take up dancing in the fuller sense which Margaret Morris advocates, it is interesting to know that she gives her full approval to modern ballroom dancing, and is enthusiastic in its recommendation so long as moderation is observed. The underlying principles of it are the same as those upon which her own technique is founded. The movements are quite natural, the feet are kept straight and in the normal position, and the poise and balance of the body are but a *development* of the natural rhythm of good walking and running. Many of the positions involve an opposition movement of the arms, shoulders, and feet which is essentially Greek. You will, in fact, find many of our modern ballroom positions among the little dancing figures which the ancient Greeks were so fond of using upon their vases and in bas-relief for decorative purposes. Still further, we can trace the influence of many other nations upon our present-day style, and in itself this is not a bad thing. The fact that its foundation is sound and fundamental to all people and all nations will go a long way to assure its permanency. New steps will come and go. New names will be found for old steps, and in the course of time will be forgotten, but much of our present-day style will remain because it is natural and elemental.

For all this, many people do not get the best out of their dancing. There is no reason why one should dance like a tailor's dummy, back and knees quite stiff, or jog along for a whole evening doing the same sequence of steps in exactly the same way. The movements should be free and smooth, the carriage graceful, and the steps relevant to the music. Our modern dances lend themselves to an infinite variety of rhythm and an expression of individuality and character through the poetry of movement, too seldom seen in our ballrooms. It is often forgotten that while the time for each fox-trot or valse, for instance, may be exactly the same, yet the melody is probably quite different. The music itself

has character, quite apart from the actual time. It is not sufficient to dance only the time; we must dance the rhythm of the music itself. Remember that the music has phrases, or sentences, with commas and full-stops; it has moods, shapes, character, melody, and we should try to get the feeling of these things into our dancing. So it is that along these lines ballroom dancing plays its full part in the Margaret Morris training.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DANCING, PAINTING, AND MUSIC.

The relationship between dancing, painting, and music is a matter of some little conjecture amongst people who are not fully conversant with modern thought in this direction, and I have often been asked why a study of drawing and painting should be considered so essential in the training of the modern dancer. The study of music is more easily accepted. That, obviously, is a big help, but the relation of drawing and painting is, perhaps, not so apparent. It is necessary to explain that by drawing and painting I imply no connection between the old academic type of study, thick as it is with the dust of ages, and the method taught in the Margaret Morris Schools. Here the pupils go direct to Nature, that mother-source of all creative endeavour, and study in their true essentials line, colour, form, movement, and the fascinating play of light and shade which governs all.

That an appreciation of these things is invaluable to the dancer will readily be seen when it is realised that a dance or ballet is but a series of pictures set in motion, and that the same laws of balance, design, composition, and colour harmony hold good in both cases. A study of these things will enable the pupil to understand the shapes and lines which they themselves make when dancing. They will know the effect of one colour placed next to another in their costume and scenery designing, and they will be able to judge how these things will look from the spectators' point of view.

Music, if you take the trouble to analyse it, has design—construction—composed of lines, shapes, colour and the grouping of chords. Some may be bold and strong, others as delicate as a gossamer web, but all have this quality of design and colour. So music is studied by the Margaret Morris pupils to gain a first-hand knowledge of

these things, so that when a piece of music is danced, the shapes and colours of the music are used in the composition of the dance. They are reproduced in the colour and design of the costumes, scenery, and in the actual movement of the dancer herself.

the process may be reversed, the dance being arranged and the costumes and scenery designed first. Then the music is composed (often by the pupils themselves) to fit the character of the dance, reproducing the lines, shapes, colours and groupings in



THE "RONDO" DANCE TO MUSIC BY BEETHOVEN.

The music is literally translated into terms of movement, colour, and line, so that its "message" is given with greater force. It not only comes to us through our sense of hearing, but is actually seen in the dance, in the setting and lighting effects. Again,

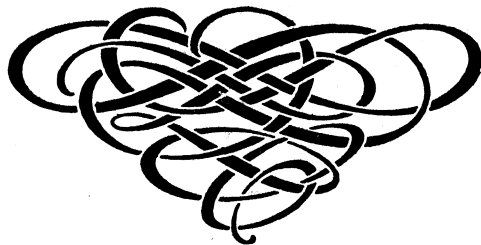
the music itself to give this fuller and more complete rendering of the main subject. All these things become clear upon seeing the performance at the Margaret Morris theatre. Margaret Morris herself is a graceful personification of the dance, as light and

intangible as air, but I do not think it is possible to describe a great dancer or a great dance within the limitations of words. Eugene Goossens or Arnold Bax might do it to music, and J. D. Fergusson has, I think, achieved it in paint.

Margaret Morris is a painter of real distinction, and that is, perhaps, why her work as a dancer is so different from that of others. She looks at dancing from the visual point of view of the artist, seeing movement as a combination of shape and lines. In composing a dance or ballet, she applies the same knowledge that she would use in painting a picture. An artist thinks first and foremost about his subject, then of the general arrangement, the spacing of the theme upon his canvas, the grouping of masses, the main lines of composition in their character and relation to the subject, the shapes these lines will make, the colour contrasts and harmonies, and the rhythmic play of light and shade that will blend the whole into one complete work. If you

substitute the dancer's stage for the artist's canvas, you will see that the procedure is much the same. The stage is the dancer's canvas, upon which she paints, for all with eyes to see, her dreams and hopes, her fears and moments of ecstasy, her tears and the whole gamut of her experience of life.

The only limitations of art are the limitations of life itself, so the artist who aspires to interpret life in all its vast complexities must find a technique equal to the task. It must have the fullest range of tone, scope, flexibility, and be capable of recording all the finer shades of thought and feeling. To this end Margaret Morris has developed in her pupils a complete understanding of the close inter-relationship of dancing, painting and music, so that all may be combined, each in its right sphere, to present as a unified whole the living, pulsating work which anyone may see in the achievements of the Margaret Morris dancers.



## LOVE'S DEATH-BED.

**A**S though Spring's dryads through a russet bower  
Should dance with Autumn's satyrs in a dream,  
Youth and the swift years through this leaf-strewn hour  
Dance hand in hand beside the dimming stream.

A drift of sunset mist comes like a cry;  
And joy, so long foredoomed, is now foregone.  
Though my weak soul should call to thee, pass by—  
Lest love, near merciful death, should linger on.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



"A man on a rock, clear above the stream, clean black against the glow. He flagged us in with his arms."

# HIS DEAD SELF

By MICHAEL KENT

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

"GIVE a dog a bad name—and hang him," they say. It is true enough that if you keep on giving a dog a bad name he'll likely hang himself. My trust is in the contrary, which is often a sound proposition: "Treat a dog with a bad name as though he had a good one, and he'll turn up trumps."

I'm thinking of Dane. That scallywag king martyr proved both points of view true.

Here in the island there's plenty of time to write and, having heard it from the very

beginning, I have determined to set down all things in order because, oh, most excellent Theophilus, whoever you may be, I have come to reckon the history of Dane as one having a lesson.

Infinite Compassion can be patient with our most hateful errors, knowing that in a flicker of Infinity they can be made good again. That's my trust. See what I mean. A broken window, say, to a kid at nine years old, may loom pretty near as wicked as murder to a man of thirty. We know the window's not irreplaceable. We see

life in a different perspective. What about God, Who sees the things of our life in a perspective of Eternity? There's time there for both window and murder to be atoned for, expiated, learned from and triumphed over. Yes, my hope is in immortality.

Dane came from a great old school. He told Ashton so himself. Ashton, who is a seafaring man, bred to it from the age of eight, never guessed what school. Only once in the early days of Dane's kingship, when he was quite drunk, Ashton heard him singing a song that stuck in the sea captain's mind so much that he wrote a piece of it down.

"God gives us bases to guard or beleaguer,  
Games to play out, whether earnest or fun,  
Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager  
Twenty and thirty and forty years on."

Anyway, you may take it that Dane's school was A 1 at Lloyds', well found and seaworthy.

Oh, I can never get the hang of this story telling business. It's like stowing the bunt of a mainsail shorthanded, no place to begin on.

But, say we lay on the coming of Dane to Kupa'rua, and make our course by that. Ashton first saw him then, ashine with salt water with blood on his hands and side. By gum, that's queer; I never thought of that before.

It had been a near trick for Ashton. Here was King Moonyati dying, and no one could deny it, and he had no son. The islanders in their chuckle-headed way, had got it into their heads that since the king had been a great good man, and it's useless saying he wasn't, he'd have there and then the everlasting life that Ashton had taught them about. They are pure children these islanders. But then, aren't we all, except that we have different backyards to play in?

Anyhow, there was Ashton in the king's hut, and the old man whispering slow between breaths that drew long and languid from the big brown box of his chest.

"Captain," said Moonyati, "I am weary and heavy laden."

"King," said Ashton shakily, for Moonyati had been an awfully decent old chap, "you will sleep, by God's grace, and after there will be no wearying."

Kilti, the brother of the king, stood in the doorway, and all that Moonyati said to Ashton or Ashton to Moonyati, he passed to the folk without in the square, where they sat round, the whole ship's company of Kupa'rua, at the edge of the palms bending

against the trade wind, waving their arms and swaying their bodies as they sang low and softly one of the hymns the captain had taught them. They'd stop to listen to what Kilti said, and then go on without signal, but with that queer unity of movement, which is a miracle of the animal creation, just as a flock of starlings wheels over a stubble field at home.

"Other refuge have I none;  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

"Captain," murmured the king, "if I too die, even as all men, succour my children."

"You can lay to that, king," said Ashton.

Then while the king picked at his blanket as though something were on his mind, Kilti passed the word. There was dead silence, except for the everlasting croon of the reef, and then the hymn again.

"Leave, ah! leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me."

It wasn't a hymn, it was just a prayer.

"Then," said the king, appealing like a child, "have I been good? Captain—not good as a white man—but maybe as good as one of the worst of the white men?"

Now, both before and after Ashton's coming to Kupa'rua, ever since the king had borne the king brand on his face, Moonyati had done right, made sure to each his own fought the bad old ways, put down head hunting. Ashton had to take strong hold of himself before he could answer: "King, I am white, and I have great honour to have been your servant."

"No," said Moonyati, and his hands had grown very still and his eyelids drooped as though they tired of lifting, "No servant, captain, I greet you as my—"

Kilti stood leaning with a hand stretched without to hush the singing.

Ashton, the old sea captain, only heard the good king sigh. Then for some long minutes there was no sound.

And Ashton covered up the face of the king decently, and came to the door of the hut and pointed to the peak of old Brumea, smoking sullenly ten good miles away. "Your father," he said, "has gone to the Mountain."

A cry rose that would have fairly touched your heart. Then Kilti, blood brother of the king, spoke. "What's this everlasting life you talk of, captain? Come, fighters."

Ashton saw spiked clubs that had been buried in the thatch of huts many a day,

and men with tears in their eyes, but with grim fighters' mouths.

"Captain," cried Kilti, "this word true. Our father sleeps. If he comes not back as you have said, all you teach is lies. Lo then, when the shadow of 'the hand' shall cover you where you stand, if our king be not awake and young and strong and happy, go seek him."

"The hand" went when old Brumea blew. It was a hill with five palm-trees on it like fingers.

And all the folk sat down in a circle round Ashton far enough off for the men to cast their clubs. I don't blame Kilti, mind you. He acted according to his lights.

They abode, maybe, a space of four hours. Sometimes Ashton strove to make plain to them that the life he spoke of was not this life, here and now. They would not believe that of the great old king. Sometimes he prayed to the Lord, for he hated the thought that through his bad teaching these kind folk should become in all innocence slayers of a man.

And the shadow of the hand grew longer, passing the edge of the circle and crawling towards him across the open space. Then when the shadow had crept up to the captain's waist went Kilti and looked within the king's hut and cried sobbing, "Art thou yet awake, Brother?"

There was no answer.

Kilti came back to the circle and he sobbed no more. But he looked at the captain. "Captain," said he, "Moonyati left a word unsaid. He greeted you as no servant, but—what? If the great king comes not to make an end of speaking will you not go to him?"

At his look the clubmen got to their feet and set their stance for throwing.

"No servant," cried Kilti with the old forgotten head-hunter's sing-song drone. "Moonyati said 'Thou art no servant—'" He looked about the ring and raised his hand to give the sign to throw. "But he would greet thee—"

"*Brother!*" came a strong English voice from the back of the ring in an impudent, nasal, droning caricature of a preacher, "*Brother, oh let us be joyful!*"

The whole company turned dumbstruck.

There was Dane come unnoticed from the sea, tall, gleaming with white, wet, English skin, muscles like those Greek bronze mantel-piece chaps you see in junk shops, bleeding from a wound under his heart, but cheery as a May morning.

In all the lagoon was no boat or raft, and this white man had risen wondrous from an empty sea to end the dead king's word.

"Moonyati!" cried Kilti, as though the word were pressed out of him.

"The same to you in French," said Dane, and hurrying forward, offered his hand with farcical gesture. "Oh, my black brother, I've dreamed about your bonny face while I have been away!"

You see the captain had tried to teach English to the islanders, but in their innocence they took such of the words as they understood at their face value, knowing nothing of the buffoonery of the man who uttered them.

Then Kilti knelt and, with lordly ceremonial, placed the white man's foot upon his own neck, then rising, led him to the captain, who stood white faced in the centre of the circle, dazed at the awful relief of this blasphemous miracle. "Captain," said Kilti in the native tongue, "I spoke evil. Has not the king called you brother—called me brother, which is truth indeed?"

"What's biting the old cockalorum?" asked Dane of the captain.

"Your coming," whispered Ashton. "Go easy. Stay quiet. It has saved my life. They take you for their king."

"Good egg!" said Dane impudently. "Is there anywhere on this blighted mud pie where a king can get a drink?"

## II.

It's a queer thing. The Captain has read the committal often enough in the course of a tidy spell of life, over the shotted grating, with men bracing their feet for the roll of the ship as they lift their burden to the rail, or in this little isle, so quiet and fair and far, but he never struck the glorious hope and triumph of the words before.

These brown children taught him that, when they took the body of King Moonyati and buried it with joy and thanksgiving as a fellow might jettison an old coat when he'd got new togs. Anyhow, had not the king with his first word told them to be joyful? And here was his discarded clay being put away while to the light of day, dazed still from his translation, saying strange words in a strange way, white of skin, merry of countenance, his spirit had returned.

Because at times of deliverance Ashton had accustomed them to sing, "Now thank we all our God," they sang it lustily coming from the burial of Moonyati, whom they

loved so, who so loved them, who had been brought back to rule and guide and care for them, world without end ! Poor sinners !

And there was the irony. Dane with the gleaming shell shawl of the king and the pearl filet round his brows, broke, time and again, into some silly ditty about a grass-hopper picking its teeth.

Ashton got him sharp under cover in his own hut. He told the people, God forgive him !—that the king had been a long journey and must rest for many days to refit, so to speak, after hard voyaging. That was enough for Kilti. He would have guarded the captain's hut till doom.

Inside Dane took off his shawl and laughed.

"My hat, Captain !" he said. "You do things in style. I'm no end glad of the tuck in you gave me. To tell you the truth—a thing I don't often do—I was about all in when I raised your mountain top. But I haven't got the hang of things yet. I thought I'd stumbled into a prayer meeting, not a funeral party."

"Well," said the Captain, "my name's Ashton."

"The reverend ?" Dane puts in.

"No, captain, merchant service."

"Jove !" cried Dane. "I took you for some sort of devil dodger."

Ashton grinned at that though the poor dead king lay heavy at his heart. "I hope I am," he said. He went on to explain.

He was rising sixty then and hale, thank Heaven, for another twenty years. All his life he'd used the sea and found the mercy of the Lord in peril of deep waters. Then because in England there was neither chick nor child nor anyone to care for, and a godless folk grown unhandy to discipline, too worldly wise for him, he'd come to this island right off the trade routes where neither pearler nor merchant ever came. "The Lord has blessed my going," said Ashton to himself. "It's time I quitted salt water to show the light of His mercy on a dark corner of the earth."

"Most exemplary," said King Dane, "and you've come to evangelise this mudpie."

He walked round the captain's room with his keen eyes busy on every detail of the place, the workshop with its store of tools and what not. He paused to con the bookshelf. "Holy Bible," said he, with that handsome cynical condescension of his that was as bad as contempt. "Common Prayer, Browning, Rewards and Fairies, the Sea

Captain's Handy Guide to Medicine. My hat ! A scratch crew."

Scratch crew or not, they were good enough companions, I reckon, for a fellow in Ashton's shoes.

Suddenly Dane flung into one of the deck chairs and reached a long arm for the captain's tobacco, home grown, home cured, in its earthen home baked jar. "I owe you my yarn," he said.

"Not if you'd liefer not," returned the captain.

But, though the man was callous and cynical and clever as an ape, courtesy was in his bones. You note how after poking ribaldry at what he'd taken for a prayer meeting, when he swam ashore out of the jaws of death, he'd yet the grace to thank Ashton for his food. He reckoned he owed that yarn and had no shame to tell it.

My word, he was a hard case.

"I'm a bad egg," he began with a queer, frank, boyish smile that somehow caught hold of you. "Danes are all very bad eggs or very good ones, and it's my turn to be addled."

And there in the duds the captain had rigged him out with and his lazy smile, and his steely eyes that seemed to ray and dazzle, and his great white forearm holding out a hand delicate as a Virgin's in some Italian temple Genoa way, he told it all. Maybe it was some ease to let another hear it.

"I got the sack from—I got the sack from school," he said, "for kissing a housemaid." He grinned. "She'd asked for it !"

Ashton understood. Dane had a face and a way with him.

That had been start enough to prove to his folk that he was one of the wild Danes, to hide away and watch carefully, and to despair over. Canada had been the place for him ; Canada, the sea anchor of all tall English ships that drag their moorings. But, bless you, sixteen hours out of the twenty-four on a broncho weren't long enough to purge the devil out of Dane. There were still four hours to eat, drink, and be merry in. Four were enough for sleep. He lit out for the States with the C.M.P., raising the dust behind him and a dead man on a bar floor who'd been first to draw—and slower on the pull.

"Silly devil," laughed Dane, "I wished him no harm, and I'd done him none."

There had been a rough house down south in one of the sweet little casino towns of the Pacific that do the devil great credit, as the Bishop said.

"I will not sit mum and let a lousy dago scoop my chips," explained Dane lazily.

By his account a cyclone was no sort of jazz to the way Dane left San Roque.

Everywhere he'd been the bad man, reckless, a gambler, watched with covert wonder as to what new devilry he'd be at, the dog with a worse name than any other dog, and a reputation to live down to.

Soon or late, all the black sheep that ever use the sea come to the islands where you can be warm and fed the year round without labour, and drunk too if you can find a wife to work for you—not that Dane ever got that far. The big hazard drew him. Pearls, home with a million, a racing stable, say, a villa down at Monaco, and a big yacht on the Condamine.

I'd forgotten to say that before his exile he'd been packed off South to learn French, gambled his allowance at the tables and come back broke.

"Are you on remittance now?" asked the Captain.

Dane shook his head. "Couldn't keep the contract, so I didn't take the dibs."

There's a queer corner in a bad egg!

"Then how did you come to Kuparua?"

"From Vaitu," he said. "Five days drifting with a cyclone at my tail. I was pearling, half shares with a cove called Scoble. Struck shell that paid us pounds and guineas every time a boy went over side. We'd ten men's fortunes saved when Scoble made me drunk with a case of 'the Widow' that we'd got for a toast to Lady Fortune if she smiled. He made me, as he thought, drunk and weighed out with the goods." He paused with narrowed eyes, as if he saw to Vaitu across the sea. "Not so drunk, mind you, that I couldn't wake and shift the marks we'd put down to buoy the reef. He piled the schooner up at dawn with a fresh wind blowing and quitted in the dinghy for the shore, while I came aboard from the bobstay where I'd hung, scooped up the treasure and took it to my dug out on the reef. Typhoon blew. I bailed four days and raised your mountain as the storm blew out, tipped up on the coral, swam ashore." Laughing he waved a hand towards the door. "There's half a million's worth of pearls in bags down on the sea floor. Isn't Lady Luck a jade?"

Night snapped down sharp as a shutter as he talked.

"Shall I light up?" asked the captain, thinking that he might rather have the dark.

"Why not?" asked he, and watched

Ashton as, one after the other, the oil wicks in the dish lit up. He's a little ugly, hairy chap, criss crossed with wrinkles, Ashton. Strangely, he felt extra ugly then. It's not as if he were given to think about it.

Dane put a hand behind the big column of his neck and his shirt bagged, showing the heave of the warm skin as he took breath unhurried. "And you a devil dodger," he said. "And I a king by divine right!" He'd heard all that. "It's war," said he, "but I'll have a run for my money!"

"Why," asked the captain sharply, "Why war?"

"Killer, drunkard, gambler, thief," laughed Dane, "with not one rag of reputation. What would have been the point of view of your prodigal son, captain, if he'd finished up in a palace instead of a pigstye? Not a return home, I'll bet."

It's a queer thing, but the chap had to be proud, because it was in his blood, and evil was all he had to be proud of.

"You'll fight tooth and nail to get me out," he said, and lounged towards the door. "Maybe as adversaries, we'd better salute and take our guard. To-morrow we engage!"

"No," said the captain, "I'm not fighting. I'm a little glad."

"Glad to have a hoodlum here?" asked Dane, lean and laughing and heartless as a shark.

"To have a white man king," returned the captain. "Killer, I've got your word for, is no fault of yours. Gambler! What's gambling more than daring, enterprise, the thing that makes men great, turned wrong way round?"

"Fancying me as a convert?" sneered the king.

"I don't know as I am," said Ashton. "Anyway, on the earth you can never run away from the goodness of God."

The king left the latch and came back to the table. "Sorry," he said, "I'm under your roof and not being a model guest. Without prejudice to the future, do you mind if I doss out here?"

"Glad," said the captain with a grin, "if you prefer me to the mosquitoes! As to this king business—any difficulties, count on me."

It set Dane laughing. "Don't doubt," he said, "I'll make things hum when I get moving! Too long I have been the under dog. I'll have the time of my life now."

Ashton was at the door of his bedroom. "Dog?" he repeated, frowning over a





"There was still the terrible hiss and boom of the steam where the white-hot stream that veined and spilled from Brumea's heaving sides went down into the sea."

memory that wouldn't come to hand. "Now? I've got it! I knew it was Browning." He held up his hand, a way he had when quoting :

"What's now? Leave now for dogs and apes  
Man has forever.

Good-night, King Dane."

### III.

ASHTON sat down for three months and saw the things he'd given his life to broken.

I'm denying nothing, extenuating nothing. It's the business of Eternity to extenuate. In his own way Dane ran riot in Kuparua.

Ashton thanked Providence that it was a gentleman's way. He was merrily drunk for days on end. Authority pleased him. He'd been long enough among the islands, and the islanders had learned enough.

English from the captain for language to be no difficulty. Beyond that the strange way of his coming and the firm faith that the soul of old Moonyati dwelt in him, made his will absolute.

Ashton kept away from the feasts and the dancing and the song. He was on a dark course, not a star to steer by barring the true sayings in his books.

It was only the certainty that endless time and endless lives must surely sail all ill, that kept him wholesome.

Dane simply went his ranting, roaring way and took no notice, though, maybe, it pleased him to teach the folk new songs that weren't in the hymn-book.

He set to work on the recovery of the pearls. Heaven knows what sort of bunkum he fed the people on, but anyhow, with the



"Ashton clutched at his shoulder. 'We're safe for the time here,' he shouted, pitching his voice in a squeak to pierce the boom. 'I'm going to fetch the people from the other side.'"

pull his coming had given him, he had but to say the word and any man of Kupa-rua would have walked proudly up Brumea, over the reeking crater edge and down the black chimney to the seething hell below.

Strangely enough this business of the pearls first showed Ashton that what is, in fact, a text for this queer yarn, is true. "Give a bad dog a good name and he'll likely turn up trumps."

As a dog King Dane was bad enough, Heaven knows, but by a queer, ironical jest of Providence, aimed at him who was by nature so ironical himself, he had come

to be more than a king, a saint triumphant, bending down to earth to guard with love and superhuman power this people whom he served.

One day when he had made clear his need for the little holland bags on the sea floor in the break of the reef where the swirl had swamped his dug-out, he took men to the spot and bade them dive and told them what to seek. They looked at him with wonder, for they knew the risk. He'd taken no pains to scare the basking shark. But with all faith one dived. Luckily he'd got his knife.

There was a swirl out of the green shadows, a swirl on the surface tinged with red. Maikitu, the diver, reappeared. "Oh, king," said he. "The devil is dead!"

They dragged him over the rock to safety, for he had now but one arm who had gone down to the sea whole, and life was jetting from the torn and stringy stump.

Dane rigged a tourniquet and brought the man to Ashton.

"Captain," he said, "here's a poor devil maimed in my service. Keep your grudge for me, but try and patch him up."

A sea-captain has all sorts of outlandish jobs. Ashton took his medicine chest and did his sawboning with one eye on the directions in the "Handy Guide" about making fast the arteries, and Maikitu, little caring that he was waist high in the grave, grinned for all his agony. "'Kitu lucky give an arm to God!"

King Dane heard that.

Maikitu came through. It takes a lot to kill a nigger, and Dane made him his valet. It tickled him to death, he told Ashton this delightedly, to learn that Maikitu had come by virtue of his office to be a sort of archbishop, privileged by his sanctity to guard the vesture of the undying king.

Such things became a big magic on the heart of Dane. That unquestioning glad obedience, that loyalty proof against any recklessness or cruelty or injustice, was a wonderful thing. It was as a good Christian views the mysteries of war, pain, catastrophe or tempest, as hard to understand but to be patiently borne in the knowledge that in His own good time and in His hidden way the King must be right.

That was what a man shouted to the captain on the night when Motu Moonyati, the king's village, was burnt down. Himself, his wife and children, had been snatched blistering from the flaming thatch. "Shall not the Lord of all the earth do right?" cried he.

In one way it was good for Motu that Dane, going well oiled to bed, tipped over a light and set the whole place flaming.

He came to Ashton the next morning.

"Padre," said he, "do you know anything about surveying?"

"I do not," returned the captain pretty short, "though a sailor man can set his hand to most things."

"Even saving sinners," said the king with his usual sneer. "You make a poor job of it, captain. The eight hundred and

ninety-three adult souls here are all idol worshippers. I'm their joss."

Ashton said nothing. The captain's a queer cuss, making his course by few lights, but I'll say this, he never lets the ship fall off. He said nothing.

"If I could get a survey," said the king, "I'd drain the bad lands of the fever water where the bugs breed. I'm standing the new town on piles, clear of the mist at nights."

"Then I'm your man," said Ashton gladly, then paused. "Say, king, how do you know the number of adults in Kupaia?"

"From my head men," said Dane. "I wanted to know where the people thrive best, where there was sickness."

"Cottoning on to the job?" the captain asked eagerly.

Dane laughed. "My dear, good fool, do you think I want to get bitten by a fever bug while I'm having the time of my life? If you can make that survey, why not do it?"

He went out. Up rose the runners. Up went the palm umbrella, and in a brace of shakes the cry: "Make way! The King!" blew faint across the clearing where the blackened posts bloomed rosy on the touch of wind and the sulky smoke smeared and eddied in the fire-clean ruins of the town.

Ashton watched him a little, then he laughed.

One of his favourite theories seemed by way of making good.

#### IV.

WHETHER the captain was right or not, King Dane could not get away from his faith in his own evil. Motu rose new and wholesome. You've heard the king's excuse.

There was a new law for the treatment of garbage. "I've got a nose, if you haven't, captain," quoth the king.

The swamps went, and with them a great deal we felt no sorrow for, water snakes, a host of flies, land crabs.

He'd learnt that in fever the natives chewed bebeeti leaf. He grew the stuff, distilled it, and dosed them with the essence.

"Every time there's a funeral," said he, "they kick up such a yowl with your psalm smiting!"

Then he drove roads connecting all five villages, and trained semaphore signallers to carry his word. "Do you think I want

a spear in the back some day, when I'm not looking?"

There was the quaint part of the thing. Dane was a better king than Moonyati, but all he did was with some lame excuse that it was for his own selfish benefit. He'd get Ashton out of the way and sneak into his quarters to mug up hygiene from the Handy Guide, putting out sentries lest he should be caught. Time and again the captain found gold hair from the king's beard in the pages.

It was that which made Ashton think he ought to tackle the king, clear away the raffle, point out that whatever he had been he was no bad man any more, and ask him, man to man, to haul the Jolly Roger and fly something with a cross on it instead.

He was a long way from his reckoning.

He went to the new built palace, the first time he had approached Dane himself for near a year.

"Hullo!" said the king, "if it isn't the little fire escape! Come to try the royal rum, Padre?"

There's another point. Dane had been pretty free with what he called rum. It is fermented cocoanut milk and fiery stuff at that, death to the nigger once it gets a hold. After a month or two Dane put a taboo on it, forbade its manufacture except by supervision, and limited its supply to head men for use under orders in the fever patch. "Think I want every buck nigger with a thirst emptying my cellar?"

"I'll take a tot," says the captain wishing to be friendly. "But I've come to put my cards on the table."

"Meaning?" asks the king.

"Meaning that I've watched you close, sir," said Ashton doggedly, "and whatever you've been you're a man I'm ready and proud to serve under. Moonyati was my friend, but he'd not your knowledge. You've done more for Kuparua with hard work, hard thinking, self sacrifice than——"

"Captain you're Emeritus Professor of the art of mushy platitudes," broke in Dane. "Do you know why I've built *Beelzebub*?"

*Beelzebub* was a forty-ton yawl that he'd been at work on for months. Considering he had had to train his carpenters and had little in the way of cutting iron to work with, he'd done well. Ashton's a sailor man and knows.

"I can't guess," said he.

"Well," said the king, "I've got her as I want her, rigged, trimmed, provisioned. I've trained her crew. They're aboard now.

I found those pearls, the better part of them, more than enough for my needs. When I'm bored here I'll uphook for Honolulu and the long trail ho——" I reckon he was going to say home, but he came about sharp. "For some place a man can be kind to himself in and no questions asked."

Dane was always like that. First he'd make a man look up to him as a master, then suddenly he'd show himself hateful.

So Ashton, biting at his moustache, hunched across the room and pulled aside the matting to look out on the dark, struggling to keep between his teeth hard words that were no names for a king.

At last he turned, set the whole business aside. What was the good? "They're stoking up a bit downstairs," he said, "Brumea's got his red hat on."

Dane nodded. "You've noticed that?"

It had been coming on all day, if one had thought of it. There had been a different note under the booming of the trade, and a bigger smoke cap on the mountain head. Darkness showed the glow more fitful.

"Perhaps," said the king drily, "you've noticed the lagoon as well."

"Mud?" returned Ashton. "I did. I reckoned on a fall of cliff."

The water had been clouded grey blue for a couple of days.

The king grinned with maddening superiority. "Perhaps you're right, my dear good——"

On that the floor gave a jerk, slewed sideways on its piles, and rolled over on to the verandah face. The Captain found himself in the lee scuppers mixed up with riff-raff from the floor. The air had come all at once to be full of the roar of typhoon, out of which, like rocks in a wild sea, stuck booms and crashes, then there came a mighty hiss and buzz that seemed as much a feeling as a sound, rattling the teeth in his head, jarring each nerve to a deadly paralysis. Dazedly he watched the spilled oil from the lamps flicker and take hold of dry kindling in little spidery corners of the dark, mad blotches of meaningless form in the blackness and the stunning whirl of sound.

One flame spread quickly, lighting up the drunken levels of the house, jagged timber still a-quiver with the earth that twitched and shivered like a frightened horse.

There came a tug on the collar of his shirt. It was the king, one foot braced on the wooden wall, one on a tangle of mats piled from the tilting floor. He pulled the captain up and pointed to a window where the high

stars showed. Awkwardly, slowly because of the list and the numbing impact of the roar, they gathered the wreckage from the floor and climbed to the square that showed now black, now rose, now gold and stood at last without. A gale sucking in from the sea caught up everything that was not fast and turned, slinging it through the air, twisting into mad devil shapes in the sudden awful lightnings that spat from new gaping cliffs, where but a few seconds before, Brumea's dome had been.

The darkness had passed. A great glare lit all the earth and sea raying from Brumea, where, even as they watched, a band of glittering gold began to crawl across the shadowy land, a pain to look on, spilling and dropping like a lazy sea, circling black isles of rock, swallowing them, toppling them down, creeping to the glittering sea that met its onrush with a tower of gleaming steam.

"The end of the world," shouted the captain, with his mouth at the king's ear.

"Hang what it is," cried Dane. "What's to be done about it?"

He waited for no reply, but with a beckoning hand slid off the house side, making a ladder of the rafters, dropped to earth and strode to where in the square place of Motu the red light shone on brown herds gathering, looking to the king for aid. The captain followed.

The explosions were now less frequent and, too, the crash of the toppling cliffs. Only there was still the terrible hiss and boom of the steam where the white-hot stream that veined and spilled from Brumea's heaving sides went down into the sea.

The king walking slowly through his people, who looked with a strange pathetic faith on him, fumbled in his pocket, brought out a pipe and filled it, kicked off an ember from a flaming post, and got a light thereby.

Ashton clutched at his shoulder. "We're safe for the time here," he shouted, pitching his voice in a squeak to pierce the boom. "I'm going to fetch the people from the other side."

"As you please," cried Dane. "I'm going to *Beelzebub*."

"Judas!" screamed the captain, livid with contempt. He turned, beckoning to any man who might follow, up the broad highway that the king had made.

## V.

It was a night of Tophet terror. Ashton dropped his five men one by one at the

forking of the roads with the word to bring all the folk to Motu, the furthest point, a good ten miles from Brumea. There were unexpected chasms in the road. Fallen palms lumbered it. Water, spilled from upturned streams and lakes, threw great ponds across it, and they had the terror of Brumea for a torch. Four miles out they ran into a cinder rain, burning the skin, an agony to eyes and throat. Yet, strangely, their pilgrimage was little good for on the way each messenger met the marshalled villagers, man, woman, child, fleeing from the death. Only on their return, when they came by the road to Saré, was no sign.

When dawn swooped sudden from the East and turned the sky to grey they came to Motu as people walking in their sleep, a band forlorn, hopeless, tottering, grey with streaks of hot wet ash.

The cinders had followed them all the way. Ashton had judged, when he first met that deadly hail, that he had run into it, but the wind had changed, and was bringing down hot lava dust and condensed steam in an invincible downpour from a great cloud, hot, sickening, sulphurous. An air scarce breathable lay over all the land.

The first man he saw when he came to the square of Motu was the headman of Saré. He pitched his voice to pierce the drumming of the rain.

"How did you get here?" he asked.

"Captain," said the headman, "the road yawned and all my folk were near buried. So we prayed to God with 'Few more years shall roll,' and up come king in his boat *Beelzebub* and take us up every man jack."

"Where is the king?" asked Ashton.

The headman grinned. "He no come back. He gave Kilti, his brother, the shell raiment. He gave a message for you, Captain."

"Where's Kilti?"

In a few minutes the old king's brother was raised out of the whirling grey. He had a bundle on his back.

"Captain," said he, "I go with my brother, the king, to Saré and take all the people off. Then King Dane say 'Tootleloo.' He has gone to the mountain."

"To the mountain?" Ashton stared, whitefaced, incredulous.

"He said that if he came not back before sundown he would come not back at all."

The captain nodded frowning. The mountain was a seething hell of lava.

"The king said that if he came not back

I, his brother, must give the shell shawl and the pearls to you, captain. You were to hold his place. The king said big grey boats couldn't be kings."

"Big grey boats?" queried the captain.

"The king said he might turn himself to the likeness of a big grey boat to take all his little people from the anger of Brumea." Kilti rolled his eyes in an effort to remember. "And then the king, my brother, said, 'Tell the captain that I owe him thanks because he showed me how to climb above the clouds and be a signal. I am glad.'"

"To climb above the clouds," Ashton could make nothing of it. With his thoughts awl, with the word "Judas" stabbing at his heart, he pounded down to the shore.

*Beelzebub*, with its rigging still aflame, had been rammed nose on to the beach, a close thing. Then Ashton noticed something else, two fire-black posts that had been the piles of huts, standing in the sea. The water had crawled up a good ten feet. The whole island was settling down. I can never put on paper what those folk endured. For perhaps a mile each side of Motu Ashton had his trustiest men to herd the desperate islanders ever and ever up hill as the water rose, and the valleys filled and cut them off and the grey mushrooms that had been palms went under in the ash strewn sea, in the grey twilight, under the drumming rain.

The rumbling had ceased. Brumea was quiet. But still, ten miles away a lazy stream of lava slid down the slopes and met the water in a rosy column of steam.

We'd been driven to the highest point of land. Here and there were folk cut off on little islands, knee deep maybe and the water climbing higher. You couldn't see the sun. Except for the distant hush of the steam all was still—still. Only now and then we sang—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee.  
Nearer to Thee!"

Ashton remembers that it was just on the words—

"E'en though it be a cross"

there came the hail, "Island, ahoy!"

He ran to meet the voice, caught the loom of blue and white service uniforms in the mist. There was a gig and a lifeboat standing in with a snottie in the bows. Somewhere out of the grey loomed the white of a pinnacle nosing in.

"What ship's that?" shouted Ashton.

"His Majesty's ship *Rover*," called back

a voice. "Do you want to be taken off?"

The captain wept.

\* \* \* \* \*

They handled it navy fashion. There were three journeys of the boats and five of the pinnace, and at last every brown soul on the island—yes, and three new born—slopping about the *Rover's* decks, where she lay near in as she dared. At last Ashton piloted the pinnace over the backbone of Kuparua before they gave over.

"All aboard?" says the captain of the gunboat to him, when he came back. "There's no knowing what's happening here. We'll have to go by the lead. I'll be glad to haul out for Vaiti as soon as the job's done."

"All aboard, sir," says Ashton, and then low to himself, "but the best we've left behind. How did you find us, sir?"

"You are running this show," said the R.N. man. "You ought to know. We raised the light of your eruption last night. We sailed round you three times and never saw a soul for the smoke. We were turning away when we caught a signal from halfway up the volcano. A man on a rock, clear above the stream, clean black against the glow. He flagged us in with his arms. Didn't you know?"

"Where is that man?" asked Ashton almost fiercely. "Did you take him off?"

"We're not made of asbestos," returned the officer. "However he got there I don't know, but the rock he was on was just an island in the lava stream. Who is Ashton?"

"That's me, sir."

The captain of the gunboat frowned. "After he had signalled us your position," he said, "he spelled out, 'Very important. Tell Ashton I owed a lot to him and Kuparua. Tell him I glimpsed you from *Beelzebub* standing out from Motu, but Saré could not wait. I see rescue up above the smoke.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

Nine months later Ashton went back to see if there was anything for his people to return to. Brumea had turned the tap off. A new island had come out of the sea, shaped like a star. Green stuff was already springing in the ashes.

But on the top of a hard rock he found a heap of ashes that had coagulated into a stone shape roughly like a huddled body, with arms shielding head and eyes.

When he brought the folk back he placed a fence about it, and no man approaches

there except with such observance as when he comes to church.

But the people have grown more experienced, more knowing, from their stay in other places. They are not quite so child-like. So varied reports run about King Dane. Some think that he was an angel of

God, and some still hold him to have been the soul of old King Moonyati, and some say that he was only a common man like you and me.

But, pitying Heaven, how long shall remorse burn like a fire in my heart for the word "Judas" ?



## AUTUMN.

### A FANTASY.

**I** saw you Autumn, dancing on the lawn  
 With the quick falling brown and yellow leaves,  
 Dancing as wildly as a laughing faun.  
 The wind-tossed leaves were caught up in your hair,  
 Dropped on your arms, clung to your floating gown  
 But still you danced, free from all human care.  
 Blue eyes and hair the colour of ripe corn,  
 And arms and legs never a moment still,  
 You danced me mad, that windy autumn dawn.

I wake up in the night and see you there  
 Floating about my room, like some pale wralth,  
 And round you swirls the goldness of your hair ;  
 I watch you dancing down the cold grey street  
 But no one turns to hear your haunting laugh  
 Or wonders at the swiftness of your feet.  
 Will you dance for ever, while I wake or sleep ?  
 Will you haunt me, till my feet begin to dance,  
 Until with wind-torn hair I spin and leap  
 And twist and twirl all day and all the night,  
 And fall at last a small un-noticed leaf  
 Pale as a ghost beneath the moon's cold light ?

KATHLEEN M. M. FORDHAM.



‘Before the switchboard a dark-haired girl was crouching.’

# A CASE FOR SUPERVISOR

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

SIR JOHN BRIMPTON, using his crutches and his one sound leg at twice the walking pace of an ordinary man, came swinging down the passage and into the small morning-room at the end. Set in a niche beside the empty hearth was a desk on which stood the telephone. Sir John’s younger brother sat in a chair drawn up to the desk, and turned a frowning face towards the door.

“Great Scot!” exclaimed the elder, glancing around the room. “You’re alone, then, Nolly?”

“Lonely as a cloud,” Nolly returned.

“Then who on earth were you nagging at? I thought you were choking off one of the servants.”

“I never need to. The power of the eye, you know.”

Sir John, more commonly known as Bunk, hoisted himself to a great chair and sat on one of the arms. He regarded his brother with an air of humorous concern.

“Well,” he remarked, “you couldn’t have been talking to yourself, appropriate as some of the epithets would have been. Were you practising a dramatic recitation?”

I’d like to hear you properly. Let’s have Gunga Din, with appropriate gestures. You’re not getting stage-struck, are you, Nolly?”

Nolly nodded and smiled as if at some invisible witness of his trials. “Yes,” he remarked, “I have a good deal to bear. Just when my jaws are dripping with foam, and I should be gnawing chunks off the furniture if I could endure the flavour of the polish, in comes my funny brother.”

Bunk grinned. “Why, what’s the matter?” he asked, in a voice smoothed and softened with false sympathy.

Nolly pointed an accusing forefinger at the telephone. “That—darn—thing!” he said bitterly.

Bunk smiled tenderly. “Poor old lad!” he murmured. “I must try to reason with him. It may be only a passing frenzy, and very often they’re amenable to reason if treated kindly. Don’t you see, Nolly, old chap, that the telephone is an inanimate object, and it’s no use cursing it.”

“It’s no use cursing at it or into it,” said Nolly bitterly.

“Oh, so you’ve been talking *into* it?”



"Yes. Wasting my breath. The deduction does you every credit, Bunk. But there are those who would have arrived at it before."

"It certainly is a nuisance," said Bunk, speaking sincerely for the first time. "What's the matter with it? Out of order?"

"Out of order? No! It's that hag at the Exchange. Things have become perfectly insufferable during the last week. I don't think I've once had the right number given me first shot. As often as not I've been told that the number I want is engaged, and I've proved afterwards that it hasn't been. About once in three times I can't get the Exchange to answer at all. This morning I can't. I've been ten minutes sitting here, jiggling this gadget and listening in to a cross between a stage thunderstorm and a dog-fight going on on the wires. And yesterday that accursed female did me out of fifteen pounds."

"Fifteen pounds? How? I thought the—er—Exchange was no robbery."

"This one is. Tony Fassnage wrote and told me that he was running Gumtree in the three o'clock at Newmarket, and advised me to have a bit on, but asked me to wait until fairly late, as lots of his pals were on it, and he didn't want too short a price. I waited until five to three before trying to ring up Goodman and Aarons. At three o'clock precisely the still small voice said: 'Number, please.' At two minutes past three a gushing female voice inquired if I were its father. I was annoyed."

"And rightly," said Bunk, nodding.

"At three minutes past three I got on to a branch of the Girls' Friendly Society. At four and a half minutes past three a miracle happened, and I heard the voice of one Aarons. In the hope that there'd been a late start, I said tentatively that I'd like a fiver to win Gumtree. And Aarons laughed, and said I was a good judge, only I was a bit too late. It had won all right, and the price was three to one. They'd just had it through on the blower. That makes fifteen pounds gone West through the gross cynical carelessness of that female at the Exchange. Ach! She's a bad woman!"

"Of course," said Bunk, "if the Exchange could be relied upon to do that sort of thing every time, you'd save money in the end."

"That isn't the point. Bunk, old man, I am not one to complain lightly—I am the only man of this age who can set up as

a serious rival to Job—but this has got just about ten per cent. beyond a joke."

Bunk nodded, assuming a judicial air. "I know," he said. "I, too, have suffered. Something ought to be done about it."

"Something's going to be done," Nolly returned energetically. "I was just trying to get through to the Rectory to fix up some tennis for this afternoon."

"Better go round and see Gabrielle," said Bunk; "it saves time. But I doubt if either of their courts'll be fit after last night's rain. You can't play on ours."

"Well, if there's nothing doing I'll use the time in concocting a little letter of complaint about our telephone service. What particularly gets my goat is the way that woman tries to be clever with me. Yesterday, after the affair Gumtree, I demanded speech with supervisor. About two minutes later I heard, 'Yes? Supervisor speaking.' And I'll swear it was the same woman. She hadn't fetched supervisor at all. She'd just tried to alter her voice."

Bunk burst out laughing. "Nolly," he said, "if you were in the same sort of fix, I think the same sort of idea might have occurred to you."

"The point is," returned Nolly, loftily ignoring the supposititious case, "that we subscribe to the telephone service, and ever since that new female's been at the Exchange we've had nothing but gross inattention, wrong numbers, and mistaken calls. Everybody's been complaining. I wonder who she is."

"Ring the bell," said Bunk. "For all information concerning the locality consult Rutherford. Nothing escapes him. He's a sort of perambulating Doomsday Book brought right up to date."

Nolly stretched out for the bell in the wall and found it. A minute later the young butler appeared.

"Rutherford," said Bunk, "there have recently been changes at the local telephone exchange, and they haven't been for the better. Who is the woman who's on duty there during the day?"

"Miss Phipps left to get married ten days ago, as you may have heard, sir," said Rutherford, with the air of one giving evidence. "The present young lady's name is Miss Wheatman, and she comes from Meadbury. She is in the habit of cycling both ways. The same man as before comes on duty in the evening. Mrs. Minns is away ill, so Miss Wheatman is at present

working there single-handed. Mrs. Huggett, who lives next door, makes tea for her."

"Thank you, Rutherford," said Bunk, smiling. "I knew you would be a mine of information."

"Nobody knows anything about this Miss Wheatman, sir," Rutherford continued. "You see, sir, she comes from Meadbury." Meadbury was a town of some eight thousand inhabitants four or five miles distant, and the metropolis of the neighbourhood.

"Then during the day there is only this Miss Wheatman at the Exchange?" Bunk asked.

"Yes, sir."

"That does her in the eye at once," said Nolly, nodding. "There wasn't any supervisor for her to fetch."

"Plenty of work to do for one girl."

"Yes, about two calls an hour," Nolly said bitterly.

"Thank you, Rutherford," said Bunk, and Rutherford went.

"Back she shall go to Meadbury," Nolly exclaimed. "If necessary, I'll have questions asked about that woman in the House of Commons."

Bunk slid off the arm of the chair and hoisted himself to the desk.

"Let's see if we can get through now," he said, taking down the receiver. "Hullo! Hullo! Is that the Exchange? Oh, hold on a moment, please! There you are, Nolly. All done by kindness."

Nolly took the receiver from his brother's hands. "Why didn't you answer when I rang up a few minutes ago?" he demanded. "What? The 'phone must have been out of order? Well, it's all right now, and it couldn't have put itself right. Could I trouble you to lay aside your needlework, or the novel, or whatever has been claiming your attention, just for a moment, and get me Tapton Admiral one-seven?"

There was a pause.

"Number engaged?" said Nolly presently in the tone of one playing a tragic part in a drama with great restraint. "Thank you." He hung up the receiver. "Bunk, this time she has gone too far." He looked at his watch. "Four minutes past eleven. Unless I find out that the Rectory telephone was in use at four minutes past eleven——"

"I'll write a letter of complaint," said Bunk quietly. "For official purposes your style is apt to be a little too florid."

"Right-ho! Instead, I'll relieve my feelings by writing an article entitled 'Why

Men Sometimes Strangle Women.' Do you think *The Times* would like it, or would it do better for one of the Sunday papers? Meanwhile I think I'll save time and temper by buzzing down to the Rectory."

## II.

ALTHOUGH Nolly in particular had been known to speak and act hastily, the brothers Brimpton were, on the whole, men of easy temper. The eccentricities of the local telephone service had, however, outworn the forbearance of even the patient Bunk. But he was a man of action rather than of words and gestures. While Nolly went scowling to the garage, he sat down and, without a cloud on his brow, wrote such a letter as might surprise and galvanise into action even a Government official. This was the first of some half dozen letters he wrote that morning.

Nolly took out one of the light cars which the brothers used for short distances and fair-weather work, flew down the avenue at such a speed as was suitable to his humour, and hooted his way out through the lodge gates. It was a beautiful day in early summer. The sky had shed its clouds over-night, and now looked as blue and warm and innocent as if the rain came from somewhere else. It was, perhaps, on such a morning that one of our lesser bards was inspired to write the lyric which set all England singing a weather forecast. The sun shone like one of a sergeant-major's buttons. The grass and trees and hedges, which had suffered no lack of moisture, still wore an air of spring freshness. It was one of those mornings on which men may be tempted, against their better judgment, to ignore the pointing finger of Duty and turn away from righteous strife to the easy and pleasant paths of peace.

"Be firm, my lad!" Nolly admonished himself. "That the birds are singing is no good reason why that young woman shouldn't be squashed. Yours is a public duty, my young Coriolanus. Suppose somebody wanted a doctor in a hurry, or the police, or the fire-brigade?"

He had almost reached the Rectory when the gate opened and Gabrielle Leyden came forth—Gabrielle in white, with a large shady hat. She turned her back on him without seeing him, and set off down the road before him towards the village. Nolly overtook her in a moment or two, and stopped the car as he drew level with her.

"Trip no further, pretty sweeting," he said.

"Hullo!" said Gabrielle, stopping. "Are you offering me a lift? Are you going into the village?"

"If you are. I was coming to see you,

"Yes, I believe a wrong call did come through just about then."

"A wrong 'un?"

"We've been having a lot of trouble with our telephone lately," said Gabrielle innocently. "Have you?"

"Trouble!" cried Nolly. He leaned over the steering wheel in an attitude of collapse. "Trouble! I've been trying to get you all this morning. If that new girl at the Exchange is allowed to continue her fell career, she'll ruin every temper in the neighbourhood."

Gabrielle climbed into the car and closed the door. "What did you want to say to me?" she asked.

"I wanted to tell you how beautiful you are. And yet I didn't know until I saw you. Three new freckles, as I'm a living man!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Five yesterday, and now there are



"The door opened to admit Lucille, carrying fruit and flowers, followed by Bunk, who was similarly laden."

and just caught you in the nick of time." He leaned sideways and opened the door for her. "I've got a question to ask you. Be very careful, please. Were you, or your reverend father, or Mrs. Leyden, or Lucille, or any of you, called on the telephone a few minutes ago—at four minutes past eleven, to be precise?"

"Let me see," said Gabrielle, reflecting. She was frowning because the sun was in her eyes, and to Nolly this frown was more delightful than any other woman's smile.

eight to-day. Oh, and I wanted to ask you about some tennis this afternoon. Our courts are pretty hopeless after the rain, and yours always did dry a bit quicker."

"I don't know that we ought to risk playing on ours, but you can come and see. Are you going to take me to the village, or are we going to have a sort of picnic here?"

"Sorry," said Nolly, and restarted the car. "It's those three new freckles. I can't think of anything else."

Gabrielle made a face at him. "That

subject," she said, "is barred if you come round this afternoon. I want you and Bunk to come and meet Publico."

"I think Bunk 'll be busy. But who's Publico?"

"A Labrador pup which father's just had given him. We call him that because he's so fond of bones."

"Eh?"

"You see," Gabrielle explained gravely, "he's very *pro bono*."

The car swerved and missed the ditch on the near side of the road by mere inches.

what takes you to the village, child? Is it shopping or good works?"

"Shopping. A little order for groceries I have to leave. Do you mind stopping at Groves's."

"Yes, and then?"

"And then you may take me home again if you like."

"Wait a moment," said Nolly. "We have both of us just grievances against that girl at the Exchange. I had been meaning to

report her, but it's such a fine day, and I'm too easily put into a good humour. The lark's on the wing, the snail's on the thorn, and all that, not to



"The first pair eyed the second pair with an amazement which was thoroughly reciprocated, and at least three of the four spoke at once in saying, 'Well, and what are you doing here?'"

"You mustn't say things like that when I'm driving," Nolly admonished her sternly. "I shall call him Pub for short. Besides, I know of one called 'The Black Dog.' But

mention the three new freckles. Let us call and expostulate with the wench. A

good strafing may make sterner measures unnecessary."

Gabrielle nodded. "I am entirely with you," she said. "The local service is undermining people's morals. Even father—you wouldn't think he was a parson if you heard what he said about it yesterday. I had to tell him that rhyme about the birds in their little nests."

The local telephone exchange was in one of a pair of cottages a quarter of a mile beyond the village. Nolly drove thither after Gabrielle had left her order at the stores, and, having climbed out and helped Gabrielle from the confined space beside the driving seat, went up to the door and smote upon it with his knuckles.

Nobody came, and Nolly smote again, this time so despotically as to hurt himself.

"I expect," he said, cherishing a damaged knuckle, "she's gone out to pick a few flowers. Anyhow, we may as well go in and see if there's anybody about."

"The feudal habit," said Gabrielle drily, "dies hard."

"Aren't you coming?" He tried the door and found that it opened. Without waiting for Gabrielle to make up her mind, he strode inside. The switch was in a room at the back, and he strode thither with all the assurance of a billeting officer and opened the door. Gabrielle followed him on tiptoe.

Before the switchboard a dark-haired girl was crouching, her hands over her face, which was sunk almost to her lap. Her ears were covered by little round metal caps connected by a wire overhead, and this, together with her attitude of despair, lent her a strange and pathetic air of being in bondage.

So Nolly saw her for a fraction of a moment. Then she dropped her hands and turned as she pulled herself upright. As she faced him he saw that her eyes were swollen and streaming with tears.

"Yes?" she said, in a choked voice. "Who are you? What are you doing here? You have no right—"

The wind was taken right out of Nolly's sails. He experienced for almost the first time in his young life a man's helplessness in the presence of a strange woman who weeps. Moreover, he had not expected her to be pretty. Imagination had sometimes caused him to visualise her with a hare lip and a squint, and sometimes decorated her with horns and a tail. But undeniably

pretty she was, in spite of her tears and swollen eyes.

"The door was open," he stammered, "and I—we—we came in. I couldn't make anybody hear."

"You have no business here. Who are you, please?"

"My name is Brimpton."

"Sir John Brimpton?" she asked, seemingly quite unawed.

"No, his brother."

"Well, what do you want?"

Delicacy and a kind of dread caused Nolly to pretend to ignore the tears.

"Miss Wheatman, isn't it?" he asked.

"Well—er—since you've been here the—er—telephone service hasn't been very good, has it?"

Defiance glowed through her tears. "Hasn't it? I can't help it. I don't care. You'd better report me. I dare say you have reported me. I don't care what happens. Only go away."

Pity for some unknown cause struggled with Nolly's somewhat keen sense of dignity. "Oh, well, of course," he said coldly, but not unkindly, "if you take that attitude—"

He was turning away when Gabrielle pushed past him and went up to the girl at the switch. "What's the matter, please?" she asked gently. "We didn't mean to upset you. Won't you tell me, please?"

Miss Wheatman seemed to pull herself together. A tiny spark of electric light glowed on the switchboard. She pulled out a plug, and when she spoke her voice was well under control.

"Number, please. . . . Tapton Admiral four. . . . *Two* pennies, please. . . . You're through."

In the midst of his pity and embarrassment Nolly could not help thinking that this must be almost a record. The girl turned away from the switchboard, looked up at Gabrielle, and fresh tears came.

"I'm very sorry," she said in a gasp. "I know everything's been going wrong. I can't help it. I can't keep my mind on anything. If you had to sit here all day, hearing nothing but voices calling numbers and then blaming you, while the man you—you cared about was dying—"

She came to a sudden halt and covered her face again. Gabrielle said nothing, but she rested a hand lightly on the arm of the telephone girl, and it may have been that in that touch there was all necessary speech.

"Of course," said Nolly blunderingly and very gruffly, "we didn't know."

For a moment or two they made a tableau, as still and silent as statues. Miss Wheatman was the next to speak.

"He may be dead by now. Last night they hardly hoped. I wish I were dead, too! I can't bear it any more . . . to sit here . . . numbers, numbers, numbers! What are numbers to me? I shan't see him again. Oh, I'm sorry, but I can't help it. For more than a week he's been lying between life and death. . . Could you do my work if—if—"

"Don't give up hope," said Gabrielle gently. "What's the matter with him?"

"Pneumonia. He—he never was strong. He's in the Cottage Hospital at Meadbury."

"They'll look after him there," Gabrielle murmured. "Don't give up hope. Very quick changes come over pneumonia patients. Plenty of patients have got better after they've been given up. Won't you tell me his name?"

The girl suddenly took flame, starting up with a kind of passionate defiance. "Why should I tell you? What is his name to you?" Then came more tears and the voice sank. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. You've been kind, and it was more than I deserved."

"I think I know how you must feel," said Gabrielle in her soft, caressing voice. "I'm so sorry we've troubled you."

"I'm sorry I've been so troublesome. . ."

Presently Nolly and Gabrielle found themselves out in the sunlight again, regarding each other uncertainly.

"Poor kid!" said Gabrielle.

"Well, that disarms us," said Nolly drily, anxious to conceal certain uncomfortable emotions, and walking to the front of the car. "Complaints and reports is orf. As tennis is unlikely this afternoon, what about barging over to the Cottage Hospital at Meadbury and taking that bloke some grapes or something?"

"I'm on," Gabrielle returned elegantly.

"Only," said Nolly warningly, "don't say anything to Bunk if we happen to run across him."

"Why not?"

"Well—er—after all I've been saying about that girl. And, you know, it's all very well, but the telephone service oughtn't to be disorganised because one of the operators' young man has got pneumonia."

"What a brute you are!" Gabrielle said, smiling faintly.

"Yes, rather," Nolly returned, strangely relieved because she thought him a brute. "And—and, you know, Bunk and I never tell each other sob-stuff stories. I don't know why it is, but we don't. But I'll undertake to see he doesn't report her."

"All right," said Gabrielle, climbing into the car. "But about this afternoon—we don't know the young man's name."

"Oh, that's easy! They never have more than about two patients at Meadbury Cottage Hospital, and this time of the year nobody else is likely to have pneumonia. Are you in a hurry? If not, we'll have a cruise round."

They had a cruise round.

### III.

HAVING finished his correspondence, Bunk took out the other light car and made for the village in order to catch the mid-day post. Outside the post office he encountered Lucille Mason, who had come down from the Rectory on a similar errand. Lucille was an old school friend of Gabrielle's, and acted as secretary to Mrs. Leyden, whose books about children were greatly esteemed as school prizes.

They stood and chatted by the letter-box.

"Nolly was trying to ring up Gabrielle this morning," Bunk remarked. "I found him foaming at the mouth. The telephone service has become simply frightful lately."

"Mr. Leyden," laughed Lucille, "called it something worse than that."

"I've written a pretty useful letter," said Bunk, "reporting that new girl. Nolly'll fall down in a fit one of these days if nothing's done. But, on second thoughts, I don't think I'll post it yet. Now I'm in the village I may as well run up to the Exchange and see what she's got to say for herself. Don't like to get anybody turned out of a job if there's any way round it. Coming?"

Lucille got into the car beside him, and they reached the Exchange some twenty minutes after Gabrielle and Nolly had gone. What transpired there it is unnecessary to put on record, save that Miss Wheatman chose not to mention that she had received previous visitors that morning.

"I don't think I'll say anything about this to Nolly," said Bunk afterwards. "He'd only accuse me of gross sentimentality and say I'd had my leg pulled. But I'll see he doesn't write and make a fuss about the poor girl."

The brothers met at the luncheon table.

"About that girl at the Exchange," said

Nolly casually, helping himself to lobster salad, "don't you trouble to write one of your beastly unpleasant letters. I think I'll look after that job, after all."

"I've already written," said Bunk coldly.

Nolly looked up quickly.

"Posted it?" he asked.

"No, not yet."

"Oh—ah—well, I'm going out this afternoon; give it to me."

"Thanks," said Bunk, "but I'm going out, too, and I'm quite capable of posting it myself."

Nolly, defeated for the moment, frowned heavily at the mayonnaise.

"I say, Bunk," he said suddenly, "I don't know that it's much use writing, after all. I don't believe these telephone people ever take any notice of complaints."

"Don't you think so?" asked Bunk, a little surprised.

"No. They just write and tell you that your complaint has been noted, and then they do nothing about it. That's what I think, anyhow. They just stick their tongues in their cheeks and think what a fool you are for wasting time and postage. I'm glad you've written, and not me. I don't care to think of red tape merchants jeering at me behind my back."

"Yes, there is that," said Bunk very thoughtfully. "All right, I'll just leave it as it is. Perhaps things will improve."

Nolly cheered up at once. "Rutherford," he said, "I think I will take some beer. About two and a half gallons, please."

Nolly called for Gabrielle at half-past three, and they were in Meadbury shortly after the church clock had chimed the three-quarters. Meadbury, being the shopping-place of half the county, boasted an excellent florist's and fruiterer's. Nolly pulled up opposite this shop and examined the window, in which hot-house strawberries, grapes, and peaches were displayed.

"I don't know," he said, "what pneumonia patients are supposed to eat, but there's no harm in getting some of everything, and just a few flowers."

They invaded the shop and came out laden. As he started the car again, Nolly in an undertone exclaimed: "Look out! Here's Lucille and old Bunk. Don't see them. I wonder what the deuce they want here."

He drove on rapidly. Gabrielle, having cast a quick glance over her shoulder, was able to report that Lucille and Bunk had pulled up before the same shop.

The Cottage Hospital was at the further end of the town. A young nurse answered their summons at the door, and, when Nolly inquired for the matron, conducted them through an aggressively clean vestibule and into a reception room furnished in such a manner as not to excite the imagination of any fever patient who might be called on to wait in it.

Three minutes later the front door bell rang again, and after an interval the door opened to admit Lucille, carrying fruit and flowers, followed by Bunk, who was similarly laden. The first pair eyed the second pair with an amazement which was thoroughly reciprocated, and at least three of the four spoke at once in saying, "Well, and what are *you* doing here?" Then the two girls began to laugh softly as if at some private jest.

"We've just come to inquire after a chap who's got pneumonia," said Nolly casually.

"So have we," said Bunk, his eyes twinkling. "What's your man's name?"

"It's just escaped me for the moment. Who's the man you've come to see?"

"I've got an awful memory for names," said Bunk, scratching his head. "I dare say we're both hunting the same fox. So it was *you* who got away with all the strawberries, was it?"

The door opened once more, and the matron, a large and capable-looking woman who wore war ribbons, appeared. She eyed the display of flowers and fruit with frank astonishment.

"Good afternoon," said Bunk, clearing his throat. "I believe you've got a pneumonia patient."

She inclined her head smilingly.

"Oh, you mean Jim Hickson—from Mr. Clarke, the coal merchant's office?"

"That's the very man," said Nolly quickly. "How is he?"

"The doctor's just gone. He's taken a considerable turn for the better, I'm glad to say. If all goes well now, we shall pull him through."

"Oh, good!" Nolly exclaimed. "We've—er—brought him a few things. May he have them?"

"With discretion, perhaps, Mr. Brimpton," said the matron, smiling. She turned to Bunk. "But how did you come to hear of him, Sir John?"

It was Lucille who answered. "Through his *fiancée*, a Miss Wheatman."

The matron looked surprised. "Is she his *fiancée*? We thought she wasn't. He's

been raving about her most of the time, and from what we could make out he didn't know whether she—ahem!—liked him or not."

"If it'll do him any good," said Bunk, "you may tell him that she most emphatically does."

The matron smiled again. "If I may take that as official, as coming from you," she said, "I venture to say that it will do him all the good in the world."

Outside the brothers avoided each other's gaze. It would have been hard to say which of them felt the more foolish, although there was an unspoken understanding between them.

"I've a sort of feeling," said Nolly airily, "that I should like to give the inhabitants

of Meadbury a treat by doing a song and dance in the middle of the road. Must be the weather, I s'pose."

Said Bunk: "One half the world doesn't know how the other half lives. People aren't machines. Even telephone operators have their private troubles which nobody else knows anything about."

In Lucille's ear Gabrielle was saying: "They're not engaged—yet. That's why she wouldn't tell us his name. She didn't even know for certain whether he cared about her or not, poor dear."

Nolly looked at his watch. "We'd better get some tea somewhere," he said. "But, first of all, one of us ought to ring up the Exchange at Tipton Admiral. I think that will be your job, Gabrielle."



## ST. PAUL'S.

**I** THINK none grieve with thee  
As we, who near thee stay  
And owe thee, day by day,  
Tranquillity.

Here for an instant's space  
Body and soul may rest,  
Wearied and toil oppressed,  
Finding new grace.

Within thy mighty walls  
The numbing roar and rush  
Grow dim, and swift thy hush  
With healing falls.

Travellers from all the earth  
View thee, a mighty fane,  
Low-toned admire, explain,  
Pass back and forth;

Naught do they dream of all  
That we, who love thee much,  
Know of thy gracious touch  
And mystical.

Now 'tis as though some friend,  
Well loved, lay sorely ill,  
Saddening our hearts until  
His sickness mend.

Where'er our feet may roam,  
Thou stay'st enshrined apart,  
The heart of London's heart,  
Our friend, our home.

GRACE MARY GOLDEN,



# THE KING'S PEACE

By RALPH DURAND

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

SLADEN was a constable of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but he had not thrown his leg across a horse since he was a recruit. Because he stood six foot four in his moccasins and had a chest and shoulders like a walrus, the Depot Superintendent, in mercy to the horses of the establishment, had drafted him to the forest-lands, where the police patrol in canoes in summer and behind dog-teams in winter. His duties were to help a sergeant and two other constables preserve the King's peace to the north of Great Slave Lake, to tell the Red Indians that if they did not keep their camps clean they must expect to get smallpox, and to head back towards civilisation any foolhardy white gold-hunter who was venturing into the Northern solitudes insufficiently equipped with food and furs. In his spare time he helped his sergeant compile statistics, but he thought himself lucky when he was able to sleep two nights running under a roof.

Towards the end of his third winter in the Force reports reached Ottawa of an epidemic of murder that had broken out among the Puipliirmuit Eskimos, whose hunting-grounds are among the islands of Coronation Gulf. The police authorities received the news from the General Manager of the Hudson Bay Company, who heard of it from an agent stationed at one of its remotest outposts, who gathered it from the gossip of Eskimo hunters who brought pelts to his store to barter for tea, saucepans, tobacco, and other things of which, until the coming of the white man, they had never felt the lack.

No tale of the kind ever loses anything in the telling, and it is probable that the Eskimo who was the original authority for the report made a bare statement of fact without comment and without offering any theory as to the motives of the murders, but the story as it reached Ottawa was that a man had made himself chief of his tribe by the drastic but simple method of

killing not only the reigning chief but also all possible rivals to the position.

The world's history is dark with the records of men who have climbed to power by murder ranging in degree from the treacherously poisoned wine cup or the stab of a hired assassin's knife up to the sacking of cities or the devastation of fair lands. But in such cases the murderer sought not power alone but the wealth, pomp and circumstance that accompany it. The very few people in Ottawa who had any first-hand knowledge of the Far North knew that the chieftainship of an Eskimo tribe carries with it no wealth, no pomp, no luxury, but is marked rather by grinding anxiety coupled with the obligation of finding food, if food is by any means to be found, both for the casual passing guest and for the weakling members of the tribe. Consequently the Commissioner of Police disbelieved half the story as soon as it reached him, but since the report was explicit that wholesale murder had been done he issued orders that the matter was to be investigated and, if the report proved true, the murderer arrested.

Though it was four hundred miles as the crow flies from Coronation Gulf and over a thousand miles by any practicable sledge-route the Great Slave Lake post was the nearest to the scene of the murders. Obviously the sergeant in charge of the post could not himself undertake an errand that might take a whole year. He therefore detailed Sladen for the job, and that everything should be done in proper form, arranged for him temporarily to receive the warrants of a coroner and a justice of the peace. Unofficially Sladen was promised that if he succeeded in bringing the murderer to justice he would be rewarded with a corporal's stripes.

He left Great Slave Lake early in March and made the best pace he could, because, except when the ground is frozen, the swampy Barren Lands that fringe the

Arctic Ocean are practically impassable. But he had to hunt as he went to get food for himself and his dogs, and at the end of May he was still a hundred miles from the sea. The snow was melting fast. Only at night was the crust hard enough to take the weight of a sledge, and each summer Arctic night was shorter than the one before. Often he and Native Joe, an Eskimo interpreter whom he had hired at Dismal Lake, sinking to the knees at every step in quaking, moss-covered tundra, had to put their shoulders to the traces and haul with the dogs. It was mid-June before, footsore himself, the dogs weary and harness-galled, he reached the shore of Coronation

They made their camp on the beach. For ten days the unsetting sun went round and round in a ring. The sea was so calm that the emerald-green masses of sea-ice that still floated in the bay were mirrored on its quivering surface. Landward between the snow-patches the swamp was gay



"He knew that the boat would come to him, for anyone who saw the smoke of his fire would know that a human being had made it, and human beings do not pass without speaking in a land where they are as thinly scattered as are ships in mid-Atlantic."

Gulf. He could go no further, unless luck came his way, until the sea froze and bridged a way to the islands, on one or other of which he hoped to find the band to which the murderer belonged.

with flowers. The air was so clear that nesting sea-gulls a mile away looked almost within gunshot range, and so still that the splash of a leaping fish awoke the echoes. A painting of the scene would have served

for a picture of the Islands of the Blessed, but a painting would not have shown the swarms of mosquitoes that bit so savagely that Sladen and Native Joe had to sit always in a smudge of smoke made by the throwing of damp moss on a fire of driftwood.

On the tenth day Sladen was cheered to hear a throbbing sound, and to see far off a minute black speck that rapidly grew larger and took the shape of a boat—a motor-driven whale-boat. He knew that the boat would come to him, for anyone who saw the smoke of his fire would know that a human being had made it, and human beings do not pass without speaking in a land where they are as thinly scattered as are ships in mid-Atlantic. As it came nearer he saw that it was manned by two skin-clad Aleuts and a white man of the type that always moves hundreds of miles in advance of the farthest-flung railway line.

After the custom of men who meet in the waste places of the world, Sladen stated his name and his errand as he offered his hand.

"Le Moyne's my name," said the newcomer. "Anywheres north of the timber is my home. I was born with snow-shoes on my feet, and I'll die on the sea-ice when my time comes. What I don't know about the Eskimo ain't worth learning, so the Hudson Bay Company hired me to prospect hereabouts for a likely spot for a new trading post. You'd better come along with me a spell. Maybe we'll run across some Eskimo who'll be able to tell us where to look for your man."

"I'll surely be glad to get away from these mosquitoes. I'll get my outfit aboard right now," said Sladen. And in ten minutes the whale-boat was under way again.

"This is real comfortable," he said, kicking dogs out of his way to make room for his long legs. "You travel in style. I didn't know you were so civilised as to have puff-puff boats up in these parts."

"You're ten years out of date if you don't know that the motor-boat is revolutionising the Arctic. A sailing-ship is helpless when it's calm—and it's generally calm in the Arctic when it isn't blowing fit to tear your beard off—and a coal-burning steamer is too bulky to nip in and out of narrow leads in the ice. I left Herschell Island only four days ago, and have been amongst field ice, most all the time, that would have kept Franklin or Parry held up all summer. I aim to get right through to Baffin Bay and to be back at Herschell well before freeze-up."

For two days the whale-boat threaded channels where the tide banked like a mill-race against smooth, ice-polished rocks, between gaunt islands on which only terns and guillemots moved. Where the land was wind-swept the soil-less shale was naked as a cinder heap. Where cliffs gave shelter, snowdrift piled on snowdrift had made solid, unthawable masses of ice. Only once in the two days did they see signs of man. Scored on the surface of a mile-long mass of packed snow were the parallel tracks of a sledge. But these led from sea-edge back to sea-edge again. They had been made before the sea-ice broke up, and the sledge that made them might be three hundred miles away.

On the third day they met and hailed a craft such as men of the Stone Age may have built, a sea-going Eskimo umiak made of sealskin stretched on a framework of whalebone. Her crew sang as they rowed, and between their feet, happily drowsing in the sunshine, their heads pillowed on each other's bodies like a newborn litter of puppies, women and dogs and children lay huddled. They were returning from the spring caribou hunting, the men said. They pointed to an island, ten miles or more away, where, they said, the man whom Sladen was seeking was to be found, and added the information that he and his people were on the verge of starvation, not having been able to go east for the reindeer hunting, owing to lack of cartridges.

"Folk who live in towns," said Le Moyne, as he turned the whale-boat's head eastward, "talk a lot of poppycock about the wicked white man killing off the poor Eskimo with bad whisky. It ain't true. But it is true that the Eskimo would be a durn sight better off if the whites had never come near their country. Take this case—a whole band starving because it's got no cartridges! Their grandfathers didn't need no cartridges. They had bows and arrows. But they scrapped them when they learned to buy rifles off the whites. Now, when they run short of ammunition, they haven't got bows and arrows, and don't know how to make 'em, and wouldn't know how to use 'em if they did."

"In the Reservations it's the white man's sicknesses that is the curse of the Indian," said Sladen. "A white kiddy will take measles and nobody think nothing of it; but let measles once get into an Indian camp, and that camp's doomed. It kills 'em off worse'n smallpox."

"That's so," said Le Moyne. "Say, you've got to obey orders, I suppose, and it won't do for the Eskimo to think as they can murder each other and the Government take no notice. But if that band is half-starved now, what'll it do in the winter, when you've arrested and taken away the only full-grown hunter it's got left? Women and children can't go sealing. It's man's work."

"That's what's troubling me. I guess I've got to swear you in as a special constable, and get you to take the murderer with you when you go back to Herschell Island. There's a police post there, and they can send him overland to the Yukon to be tried at Dawson City. I'll send a report of the case with you, and, as he's entitled to all the protection he can get, I'll get you to take along, too, the best witness he's got for the defence."

"And what'll you do?"

"I guess I've got to stay behind and try and keep the rest of the band alive through the winter. I've never harpooned a seal, but I reckon I can learn. By the time the murderer has been tried, the Commissioner can maybe get a word to me what he wants me to do."

On the island to which they had been directed there was little to justify the use of the word "tribe" in the report that had reached Ottawa. On the beach four boys and girls, from ten to fifteen years old, were laboriously hauling a seine-net. In the background were three tents of caribou skin. They were old and tattered, yet to a townsman the poverty of the camp would not have been at once apparent. Such an one might even have commended it as exceptionally clean. To Le Moyne's eye the cleanliness was a sign of dire poverty. No scavenging ravens hopped between the tents, for no offal littered the ground. The human beings had left so little for the dogs that the dogs had left nothing at all for the ravens. Yet there were only two dogs, and these, instead of barking at the strangers, squatted on their haunches, looking wistfully up at some carcasses of sea-birds, piled on a staging out of their reach. Most significant of all was the absence of babies. There was no child in the camp that was not old enough to take part in the work of food-getting.

Three women were squatting in front of the tents. One, a young woman, was deftly patching a pair of sealskin boots. Another, middle-aged, was bending fish-

hooks on to a long fishing line. The third, old, feeble, terribly defaced by a recent scar that stretched from eyebrow to chin, was sitting hand idle, muttering to herself.

The youngest woman rose hospitably to take one of a string of fish that hung drying in the sun, but Le Moyne stopped her with a gesture.

"We have eaten," he said.

"Ask her what her name is," said Sladen.

"Nin-Gee-Oo, wife of Tata-Migana," answered the young woman.

"Ask her where Tata-Migana is."

"He saw you coming and ran away, because he knew by your boat that you were white men, and he was afraid that you had come to take him for killing Negvic."

"The rumour that came through about the murder seems to have been pretty straight goods," commented Sladen. "Now, before I can arrest the murderer, I've got to hold an inquest, and it is my duty to empanel a jury, if I can get one. I guess one jurymen is better than none at all, so I'll swear you in, Le Moyne, and we'll hold the inquest right now. Lift your hand, please. You shall well and truly make inquest on the death of Negvic and the rest of the batch—we'll get their names later—without fear or prejudice and give your verdict in accordance with the evidence. That's right! We can't view the bodies, because the murders were committed in winter when the band was on the sea ice, and that broke up weeks ago, so we'll go on asking questions. Now it don't seem right to make a woman give evidence against her husband, so just ask that middle-aged woman, Le Moyne, why Tata-Migana killed Negvic."

"Because Negvic would have killed Tata-Migana."

Sladen scribbled the statement in his note-book.

"She says," added Le Moyne, "that she was the wife of Shag-Wak-Toe, that Negvic killed him and that Tata-Migana is her son."

"She's the murderer's mother, is she? Then we shan't get much straight evidence out of her. See what you can get out of the old woman."

The old crone did not answer when asked her name, but the other women volunteered the information that she was Okalitama, wife of Negvic.

"She's the one to get the truth out of then," said Sladen. "Ask her why Tata-Migana killed her husband."

But the old woman could not be got to take any interest in the proceedings. She muttered and mumbled to herself and answered nothing. Nin-Gee-Oo pointed to the scar on her face. "She has been sick in the head since she got that," she said.

"You'll have to let the others do the talking," said Le Moyne.

"What's the use?" said Sladen. "They'll only lie. It's as plain as mud that they've put their heads together and decided to lay the blame on Negvic, because he's dead and can't say anything different. Their story will be that Tata-Migana killed Negvic in self-defence and you can bet they've threatened to kill the old woman if she says anything."

"I've never known an Eskimo lie," said Le Moyne. "It don't seem to come natural to 'em."

"Anyway, they admit that Tata-Migana killed Negvic. I guess you, as coroner's juryman, will bring in a verdict to that effect?"

"Sure," said Le Moyne.

"Then if you'll just sign the verdict in my notebook, I, as Justice of the Peace, can give myself, as constable of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a warrant to arrest Tata-Migana. Ask 'em where Tata-Migana went to."

Shag-Wak-Toe's widow pointed to an isolated, flat-topped, precipitous-sided rock, about fifty feet high, that stood up like a watch tower from the beach about a mile away.

"He is there," she said, "but I think that he will kill you if you try to take him."

"I guess me and my Aleuts had better help you," said Le Moyne. "Unless his cartridges are altogether finished, he'll have



"He held up his empty hands 'I'm unarmed,' he cried. 'Tell him Joe, to look for himself and see that I'm not armed.'"



got his rifle with him. There's no sort of cover for you, neither while you're crossing the beach nor climbing the rock, and he'll be under cover all the while. We'd better surround him."

"No, sir," said Sladen. "I'll only take Joe to interpret for me. I've got to take him single-handed. It isn't just to take one murderer that I've been sent all this way. It's to show the Eskimo that they've got to respect the white man and the white man's laws. And they wouldn't think no more of us than dirt if it got about that it took two white men and three Aleuts to capture one Eskimo. I'll tell you what, though"—Sladen tore a sheet from his notebook and wrote on it: *Miss Katie Brown, Mackay's Farm, Coyote Creek, near Edmonton*—"if I don't come back, you might just drop a line to that young lady and tell her—I guess you'll know what to tell her."

"I guess I will," said Le Moyne gravely, as he folded the paper.

Sladen walked away a few yards, hesitated, came back and laid his rifle on the shingle.

"Reckon I'll stand more chance," he said, "if I go unarmed."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sladen was not one of those men—more to be envied than admired—who do not know what fear is. From the time that he got within rifle-range of the rock until he was within twenty-five yards of it was perhaps the most nerve-racking five minutes of his life. Then he breathed more freely. As the murderer had not yet shot him, either he had no ammunition or else he was prepared to make peace-talk. Sladen stood at the foot of the rock and shouted, calling

the murderer by name. There was no answer, but the echoes of his own voice shouted from cliff and rock: "Tata-Migana, Migana, Migana!" that got fainter and fainter and died away in an uncanny whisper.

He began to climb the rock. But he had not mounted six feet before a heavy stone crashed bounding down the slope, missing his shoulder by a few inches. He jumped down again on the shingle and held up his empty hands.

"I'm unarmed," he cried. "Tell him, Joe, to look for himself and see that I'm not armed."

A head and shoulders peered over the rock edge.

"He say, what you want?" said the interpreter.

"Tell him that I've got to send him to the Big White Chief because he shot Negvic. Tell him he'll have a fair trial."

The head and shoulders disappeared.

"He not coming" said Native Joe.

Sladen sat down on the beach and lit his pipe. Because it is not a white man's nature to sit still for long, he threw pebbles into the sea. Then he got up and paced the shingle. Then he sat down again and made Native Joe shout to Tata-Migana that as he had got to come he had better come at once.

A soft haze dimmed the horizon and crept landward, blurring the outlines of rock and headland, and grew denser till even Tata-Migana's stronghold was hidden in swirling mist. A soft penetrating rain began to fall.

Two—four—six hours passed. Sladen's work in the police had taught him patience, but he could not match the inherent patience of a man bred from childhood to sit in bitter cold, for twenty-four hours at a time if need be, harpoon in hand, motionless over a seal's breathing-hole. He knew that Tata-Migana must sooner or later come off the rock or starve. But starving is part of an Eskimo's trade. It might be days before the murderer surrendered. Sladen

went back to the camp and summoned Nin-Gee-Oo.

"Go and tell Tata-Migana that he must come," he said through the interpreter. "Tell him that he will have a fair trial. Tell him that if he does not obey the Big White Chief, the Big White Chief will not let him go to the trading posts to buy cartridges and fish-hooks and knives from the white man."

Nin-Gee-Oo was absent an hour. She returned with the message that Tata-Migana could not go to the Big White Chief because his whole band would die of starvation if he were taken from them.

"Go back and tell him," said Sladen, "that I, who am the messenger of the Big White Chief, promise that you shall not die. Tell him to come and talk with me. Tell him that if he will come and talk with me I give my word that if the peace talk comes to nothing I will let him go back to his rock unharmed before I come to take him."

When Nin-Gee-Oo came back for the second time, Tata-Migana came with her. His eyes were dull with fatigue, his face haggard with care, though he was scarcely more than a boy. Sladen told the women to feed him, and, when he had eaten, called all the band into one tent.

Noticing how wistfully the children had watched Tata-Migana eat, he had distributed a lavish supply of ship's biscuits, that the women and children munched as they sat in a circle. All kept their awed eyes fixed on Sladen. To them he was the symbol of a vague, inexplicable, arbitrary Power, more capricious even than Nature herself, that could give splendidly or smite terribly. It was still raining, and their wet caribou-skin clothes stank like rancid grease.

"Now, Joe," said Sladen, "make Tata-Migana understand that he don't need to say anything that I can use in evidence against him. Maybe that's a bit too difficult to interpret. I guess, Le Moyne, you had better act for him and see fair play. Now, Tata-Migana, did you kill Negvic?"

"I killed him because he would have killed me," said Tata-Migana. "When I had killed him my wife, Nin-Gee-Oo, and I took his wife, Okalitama, to live with us lest she should starve."

But Sladen was searching for a motive for the murder and could only think of motives such as would actuate the kind of criminal that had come within his experience.

"Ask him, Joe, whether he took Negvic's

rifle and sledge and gear when he had killed him," he said.

"You don't need to answer that question," cautioned Le Moyne in his capacity as prisoner's advocate. Then he said to Sladen:

"I guess you had better let him begin at the beginning."

The beginning of Tata-Migana's story had little apparent connection with the murders, but Sladen let him tell it in his own way.

"It is our custom," he said, "in the hot weather, in the moon before the lakes freeze, to go south to the mainland to catch salmon. When the lakes freeze, we go eastward four days' journey to meet the caribou as they go south. After that, all through the winter night, we live on the sea-ice, hunting the seal. When the sun comes back, we go to meet the caribou as they come back north. After that we fish in the open sea till the salmon-hunting moon comes again. That is our year.

"Once in three years, or it may be four, at the beginning of the winter night, we go far to the north, twenty days' journey, to hunt the white bear, so as to have fur to barter at the trading post for cartridges and the things that we cannot get except from the whites. At the beginning of the long night of last winter we needed cartridges. Negvic had but ten left for his rifle; Shag-Wak-Toe, my father, had eight; and I had one only. Negvic said that we would go north to hunt the white bear. On the day that we started we saw the sun for the last time.

"After we had slept thrice on the journey one of the dogs was taken with the shivering sickness."

"Distemper," explained Le Moyne. "Very rare in these parts, but it's all up with a dog-team when it starts among them."

"Very soon that dog died, and three more were ill," continued Tata-Migana. "Negvic gave orders that all should be killed. It is better to kill and eat a dog while it is fat than let it sicken and at the last have nothing but lean bones to gnaw. We turned and, travelling slowly because there were no dogs to pull the sledges, came back to the sea-ice and made our camp.

"The seal-hunting was good, and I had no care. I was newly married and had no children to think for. But Negvic was troubled. He thought for all of us, and he thought of the seasons that were to come,



as well as the season that was then with us. He knew that without cartridges we could not go to hunt the caribou when the sun came back, and that if we did not hunt the caribou we should have no meat all through the summer and no skins for the tents or clothing. Except when he gave orders, such as that none might eat more than enough to keep himself strong, he spoke to no one, all through the first moon of winter, except to Okalitama, his wife.

"When the second moon of winter was full, he shut himself up in his igloo to take counsel of his tornak. There sprung up a bitter wind with much driving snow. None could leave the igloos, but always above the howling of the gale we could hear Negvic beating his drum and calling on his tornak. When the blizzard was at its worst Okalitama fought her way through it to my father's igloo. Her face was shattered by a bullet. Negvic had shot her as she slept. For a long while she lay not daring to groan lest, knowing that she still lived, he should shoot her again. Then he had slept and she had crawled to Shag-Wak-Toe's igloo. Very soon we heard Negvic's voice again. He was not praying to his tornak. He was singing a song that we sing when the hunting has been good. Then we knew that he was smitten with the winter madness."

"I know what that is," said Le Moyne. "Once, when I wintered with a band of the Kelewiktomuits, their chief got it. Semi-starvation is partly the cause, I believe, and the dreariness of the long night has something to do with it, but anxiety is at the bottom of it, I reckon, because women and children, those who have others to think for them, don't get it, only chiefs and heads of families. When a man gets it, he starts in killing everyone. The man I speak of killed his wife and children, and then started on the rest of the band."

"What did you do about it?"

"Well, between ourselves, and on the understanding that it goes no further, I don't mind admitting that I shot him."

"Because Negvic was mad," continued Tata-Migana, "we looked to Shag-Wak-Toe for orders. Though the blizzard still blew, he made us leave that camp and build another a day's journey away. Because we were afraid of Negvic, we built one big igloo, for us all—it is easier to guard one igloo than two; there were eleven of us. Shag-Wak-Toe, my father, and my mother, made two; Okalitama, Negvic's wife, that was now the wife of Shag-Wak-Toe, made

three; myself and Nin-Gee-Oo, my wife, five; and my six brothers and sisters—the two youngest have since died."

"Best not ask how," commented Le Moyne.

"We had not brought much food," continued Tata-Migana, "because Okalitama could not walk and there were no dogs to help draw the sledges. We left behind most of the meat that Negvic, before he went mad, made us store. When the igloo was built, Shag-Wak-Toe stayed in the camp to guard it, and I went to hunt the seal. I was in great fear, as I sat over the seal-hole, lest Negvic should come and kill me. Yet I dared not watch for him, because when a seal comes to its hole it comes quickly. One must not take one's eyes from the hole."

"It was not as I sat over the seal-hole, but when I had killed a seal and was dragging it back to camp, that Negvic shot me. My back was bent and my head bowed as I strained at the sledge-traces, so that I could not see far afield."

Tata-Migana pulled off his glove and showed a shattered left hand. "It was there the bullet struck me. Negvic went away singing and shouting after he had shot me, and it was long before I reached the new igloo. The seal was heavy, and my head swam with the pain of my wound."

"After that Shag-Wak-Toe would let no one leave the igloo. From time to time Negvic came and shouted to us to come out and be killed, and after a while went away again. When all the seal meat was eaten, we ate the sledge harness, and when there was no more seal-blubber for the lamp, we sat in the dark."

"Shag-Wak-Toe said he must kill Negvic. He made a plan to kill him. He cut a hole in the back of the igloo, opposite the tunnel through which we entered. When next Negvic came he told me to crawl through the tunnel, making a noise as if I were going to go out, but on no account to go out. He wanted Negvic to watch the mouth of the tunnel while he himself crawled out of the hole at the back to shoot him. I did as I was told. I heard Shag-Wak-Toe crawl out of the hole. I heard a shot, and said 'Negvic is dead.' But it was Shag-Wak-Toe who was dead. I heard Negvic go away. As he went he laughed and shouted an' sang."

"Swiftly I took my rifle and followed. I did not try to shoot Negvic in the back, because I had but one cartridge and dared not miss. I went wide of him and ran to



his igloo and went inside to wait for him.

"It was very dark in Negvic's igloo, because the blubber-lamp had gone out. I lay in the tunnel with my rifle aimed at a star that danced in the frost. I heard Negvic come. I heard him go down on hands and knees to crawl in. When his body hid the star I fired.

"When I had killed him I broke my rifle because it had killed a man. Then I broke Negvic's rifle because it had killed a man. There was meat in the igloo, and I wished to go back swiftly, carrying some of it to the hungry children; but before I went I laid Negvic's body on the sleeping-bench and sang the song of the Dead, because he was our chief before the madness took him.

"Soon afterwards I met a band of our people on the ice, and I bartered Shag-Wak-Toe's rifle for those two dogs. If one must choose between dogs or a rifle, it is better to have dogs. The people must have told my tale, else how did the Big White Chief know."

Tata-Migana rose to his feet.

"That is the story of the killing of Negvic," he said. "Now I go back to the rock. You have given your word to let me go back to it. If you come to take me there, I will kill you because without me the women and children will starve. But if you do not try to take me, I give my word that when my eldest brother is old enough to take my place, I will surrender

myself for the Big White Chief to do with me as he wills."

"Wait a little," said Sladen. "I guess, Le Moyne, we'd better wash out our first verdict. How would this do? '*We, the undersigned, are agreed that Tata-Migana killed Negvic for the common good and safety of all that he had the care of. Furthermore, we are agreed that we don't see what else he could have done. Furthermore, we are agreed that he is entitled to a grant-in-aid to save his band from famine.*'"

"I'll sign that," said Le Moyne. "But by the time the Government can send 'em a grant-in-aid as like as not they'll all be dead."

"Not if I give it 'em now. My idea is to give Tata-Migana my rifle and ammunition and dogs. Native Joe and me will stay here for a bit, helping to feed his crowd, and, seeing as we can't get back the way we came without dogs, I'll ask you to call here on your way back and give us a lift as far as Herschell Island."

\* \* \* \* \*

The drizzling rain turned to snow. Then the sky cleared, and Le Moyne embarked to continue his journey eastward.

"Guess you're pleased the way things turned out," he said, as he said good-bye to Sladen.

"That's so," said Sladen. "But I can't help remembering that if I'd been justified in taking Tata-Migana outside to stand his trial, they would have given me a corporal's stripes to sew on my sleeve."

## OCTOBER PEACE.

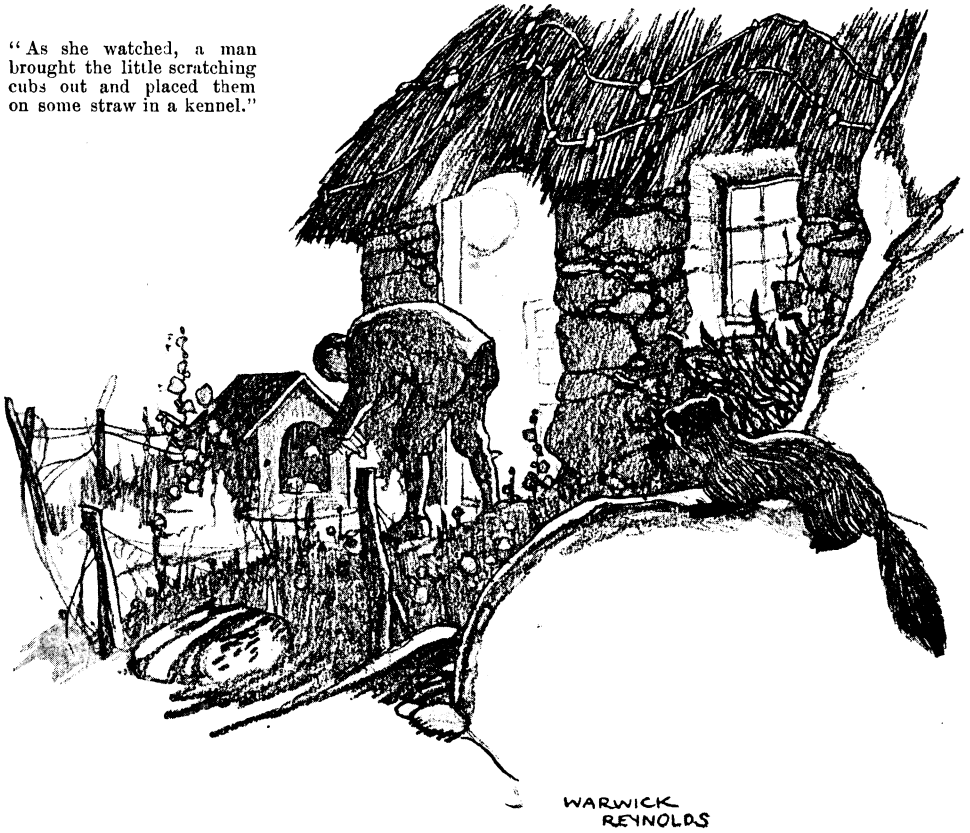
**T**HIS bland October has my heart,  
That is for me the sweet year's crown—  
A glory ere her youth depart,  
Before time brings her banners down.

Sadness there is, a wailing even,  
For summer gone where all things go,  
But joy too that my soul is given  
This autumn loveliness to know.

The crisp leaves yellow in the glades  
And from the copse a late bird flies,  
How wonderfully the year fades,  
How beautifully Beauty dies!

ERIC CHILMAN.

"As she watched, a man brought the little scratching cubs out and placed them on some straw in a kennel."



# SWEETMART

## A STORY OF TWO MOTHERS

By H. THOBURN-CLARKE

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

IT was a strangely secluded village, and very few people suspected its existence, for the scattered cottages, nestling among the rocks that terraced the fell side, were so overshadowed by crags and forest trees, that they simply melted into the landscape as if they were part of the whole. One could see a mass of blossoming roses, a riot of gay colouring, and wonder why it clung to the fell side, then a closer look would show peepholes that were really windows looking out from lichen and moss-covered walls, that appeared just a bit of prominent rock fantastically shaped

by Nature into the semblance of a hut. Everything was gnarled and old. Even the apple trees, of which there were many, had assumed their look of having always belonged to the fell side. They were also lichen and moss-covered, and they, too, seemed to melt away into a shadowy whole with the cottages and rocks.

The only definite thing in the wide countryside was the roadway that wound below the terraces, following the floor of the ravine-like valley. It was deeply embowered in masses of wild sweet-brier, dog-roses, rowans, guelder roses, and the many shrubs that

love to cling to rocky slopes. For the better part of the day the road lay in deep shadow, almost deserted except by the cows and villagers who came and went at rare intervals.

But at night the road was quite another thing. During the day it looked grey and dull, almost black in the shadow, but when the sun set and darkness fell, it glowed strangely white, and the night life awoke. Rats and mice and such small deer came sneaking out of their holes and ran squeaking about, seeking adventure, fights, and I wot not, for many dangers lurked for the unwary in its solitudes. Rabbits rarely used the road, although it was a short cut to the fresh, sweet grass growing on many paddocks that faced the seashore. Yet occasionally a young and venturesome rabbit would rush at a mad gallop along its winding length, for well he knew the many creatures that lurked there waiting for him.

Even the poacher rarely prowled along it, and Red Vixen had things very much her own way, for she was the biggest of the night folk, if we except the big dog otter who was given to wandering along it, seeking a marshy bit of land, where frogs loved to revel and where deep, wide cuts crossed the low-lying fields that had once formed an arm of the sea, and rejoiced in the name of Flukey Harbour, the said cuts being a useful place into which to retreat when danger threatened.

It was a still, calm night, the moon riding high in a steel-blue sky, its rays casting a delicate lacework of silver upon the road, but none of the rays touched Red Vixen. She sat gravely cleaning herself under the shadow of a big, drooping, white dog-rose bush, the blossoms glowing like stars in the twilight gloom of the ravine. Not that Red Vixen cared a pin for the roses, although she had cunningly concealed herself in the darkness cast by the bush.

Never had the music of a pack of hounds, in full cry, waked the silence of the rocky fells. It was not a hunting district, and Red Vixen had never heard the sound of a "Tally ho!" She had never had to run for her life before the hunters. Even the farmers, with their fox-shoots, their guns, and their beaters, had not troubled the ravine. For well they knew it would be useless. No fox could be driven in a place that simply consisted of one great hiding place. Instead, the men who smarted from the damage done among the lambs, hid themselves in trees, and waited during the night

in the hope that they might get a shot at the fox that was troubling the country side. Even now she was grinningly watching the movements of a man who thought himself concealed in an apple tree. Perhaps she might not have noticed him, for she had no intention of raiding his hen-house that night, and had been thinking of something far more important than a man in an apple tree as she came round the bend. But the warning whispered hurriedly along the whole length of the road by the night folk had made her slip silently, like a shadow, into the gloom that lay heavy under the dog-rose.

All living things had vanished under cover except Sweetmart. She, alone of all the wild folk, cared nothing for the man in the apple tree. Her very daring helped her concealment, and she darted up into a scrub oak. Here she hung, gazing downwards, her glowing eyes fixed upon the man, who, all unconscious of her presence, fingered his gun and watched the bend of the road, waiting for Red Vixen to come into sight. The fox's misdeeds had been many, and there was not a hen-house that had not been raided by her during the last few days. A vendetta had been sworn against her, and not one, but half a dozen men, armed with guns, were waiting for her arrival. But they waited in vain, although they kept in their hiding-places until the first faint grey on the eastern horizon told that day was breaking, while Red Vixen had loped off to her lair under a great mass of boulder that crowned a fell about a mile away.

Sweetmart cared nothing for danger. She seemed to glory in it, for she whirled down from the scrub oak out into the open, dancing fantastically from rock to rock, in and out of the stray moonbeams that, fluttering through the leaves, formed a lacework of fretted silver upon the ground and rocks. It was a wonder the man did not see her, but perhaps her movements were too swift. She darted like a mad thing from trunk to trunk, whirling up to the top of the tree, scampering through the branches, her vividly bright eyes fixed upon the watcher all the while. Sometimes her colours blended with the shadows, sometimes they seemed a bit of the moonlight, but the eye could hardly catch a glimpse of a being so agile and dainty in her movements.

There was method in what she did. There was a tiny hole in the hen-house nestling under the rocks not a dozen yards from the

man in the apple tree, and Sweetmart had her eyes upon that hole. Suddenly she dropped lightly from an overhanging branch straight on to the hen-house roof. The man had looked away, and she had been waiting for just that chance. It was only a few seconds, but Sweetmart had slid through the hole, dropped lightly on to a beam just below, and from there to the perch, on which four Rhode Island Reds slept serenely with their heads under their wings. Sweetmart's eyes glistened hungrily as she crept swiftly along the perch, and before an unfortunate hen awoke and squawked, Sweetmart had fixed her teeth deeply in its throat. Together the two hurtled to the ground, but Sweetmart retained her hold, and when the startled man above in the apple tree had scrambled down and reached the hen-house door, she had taken a deep draught of the hen's life-blood, and it was quite dead. Sweetmart gazed up angrily at the man as the door opened and the light from a dark lantern was flashed around the hen-house; but she did not utter a sound, and, melting swiftly into the shadow, she flashed like a streak through the open door, past his legs and up into the scrub oak once more. The man was conscious of a something whizzing past, but that was all. Then he looked with astonishment at a dead hen lying under the perch, her throat still bleeding from the wound made by the unknown creature that had passed him like a shadow.

Sweetmart did not stop to watch his examination of the hen-house, but bounded away down on to the roadway below, and with long leaps had soon gained the mouth of the ravine, and was out on the moorland, now bathed in the vivid moonlight. Rabbits were playing in every direction, but a big buck caught sight of her scrambling over a wall, and with a thump of his hind feet had warned the rest. There was a wild stampede, and Sweetmart saw the flash of dozens of bobbing white tails in every direction, as the rabbits darted for their burrows. Then all was empty, except for the great barn owl that fluttered, like some big moth, over the short grass, seeking field-mice. Away in the distance Red Vixen woofed sullenly. Hunting was decidedly bad, and she voiced her discontent.

Sweetmart bounded lightly over the short grass until she reached a long line of weathered limestone under which the rabbits had excavated their burrows. For a second or two she sniffed at the mouth

of the burrows, then, with a rush, dashed into the largest. There was a wild scurry of the inhabitants, and a minute later most of them had darted out and were bounding madly off across the moor. But one big doe was cornered, and, with a growl, Sweetmart hurled herself upon the cowering rabbit. The rabbit squealed loudly, but, although it struggled wildly, nothing could dislodge the hold of the savage creature that had seized her. At last the struggles grew less and less, until finally the tortured rabbit lay still, and Sweetmart drank deeply of its life-blood, ceasing only when she had drained the body. Then, with slow deliberation, switching her beautiful brush of a tail and emitting short, sharp growls, she ate her fill of the warm flesh. Her hunger appeased, she would, under other conditions, have denned up and slept beside her prey; but away on the high fells her litter of young ones called, and straight as a die she bounded off. Across the moors, up and up, through tangle of fretted limestone, scattered clumps of holly, yew and scrub oak, she made her way, until she stopped beneath a barrier of water-worn boulders that stood out like a great ridge on the top of the fell. It looked totally inaccessible, but Sweetmart knew better. Creeping into what looked like a narrow crack in the wall of rock, she climbed upwards until she came to a ledge just half-way up the barrier. Here in a sheltered corner the winter winds had collected masses of dead, brown leaves, and in the heart of them she had made her nest.

Nestling in the cosy warmth were three tiny cubs. They were still blind, but old enough to whimper protestingly as their mother gently pressed her way among them and, curling up, cuddled them comfortably to her breast; and so lying she dropped asleep and slept far into the day. Suddenly she was startled by the sound of voices, and, peering out from her vantage point, she saw a party of men searching among the rocks and fretted limestone of the moor below, while their dogs ran sniffing about. A vague alarm seized her, and she slunk back to her cubs, sitting, alert and defiant, in the entrance to their retreat. A minute later she saw the dogs in full cry after her mate, who, circling around, darted under a dense patch of bramble, and thus, while the dogs were busy forcing a way through the clump, gained a great yew tree, and, rushing up into its top, sprang nimbly into a mass

of rowans and swung himself on to the boulders. Five minutes later he reached Sweetmart, while far below them the dogs cast around, seeking to discover the retreat of the lost pine-marten.

But the men were not troubling about a pine-marten, although most of them had never seen one before. They were out to discover Red Vixen's earth. The long night watch had been in vain. Red Vixen had been too wary to come within range of their guns, and now the order had gone out that her earth must be found and the cubs dug out. Jem Hudson was the bitterest of the men, for he had lost a family of goslings, that had vanished one by one during the daytime, and Red Vixen had been seen carrying one off to her den.

Sweetmart watched and waited until the men, having drawn a blank, called off their dogs and vanished over the edge of the slope. Then, with a final look at her sleeping cubs, she and her mate bounded down the side of the



"The movements of the men were so mysterious, so strange, that she was fascinated. She could not make out why they drilled holes in the hard rock."

boulder, and, racing and bounding with the maddest gambols of sheer joy, the two dashed across the moor, startling the rabbits, who, because it was just about sundown, were venturing out from their burrows. The memory of the hen-house still lingered, and Sweetmart made for the

ravine, while her mate departed upon a hunting expedition of his own.

Suddenly she stiffened and froze, dropping slowly to the ground, her beady eyes fixed in front of her, while she sniffed eagerly with uplifted nose. It was the man-scent borne strongly upon the evening air,



Sweetmart was just creeping forward to examine the earth, when she was brought up swiftly by the appearance of Red Vixen's head. Their friendship might have been called an armed neutrality, for neither of them would have trusted her young ones to the other. Red Vixen snarled suggestively, showing a row of

"The journey was repeated again and again, until all the little cubs lay, snug and safe, in the leaf-filled crevice on the top of the rocks."

and its very unexpectedness startled Sweetmart. Sneaking forward, she saw Jem Hudson carefully examining an earth. He had discovered Red Vixen's home, and, with a grin of satisfaction, he closed the slide of his lantern and hurried off to gather his cronies together, and secure spades and pickaxes with which to dig out the cubs.

sharp white teeth, and Sweetmart vanished mysteriously into the dim recesses under a piece of limestone. Then she waited and watched.

Red Vixen came quietly out from her earth and, crouching meditatively in front of it, yapped shrilly once or twice, then, diving into the hollow behind her,

emerged, carrying a small fox in her mouth. She set off at a swift trot to a tangle of bramble and limestone, and, having deposited the cub in safety, returned for the rest; and when Jem Hudson and his friends had dug out the earth they found nothing but an empty nest and the feathers of many pheasants and poultry. They cursed their luck, but Red Vixen was amusing herself with killing a weakly lamb some distance away, quite certain that, as the men had left their dogs at home, none of them would find her cubs. They were certainly a temptation to Sweetmart, but with that strange honour of the wild folk dwelling in the same district, she resisted the desire to slay the soft, round things, and darted off, with long, graceful bounds, seeking a hen-house where perchance there might be a hole large enough for her to climb through and feast her fill upon the hens within. Luckily for herself, she found what she sought, and, entering, slaughtered the whole flock and drank their blood. She was so gorged with blood that daylight was just coming up over the horizon when she awoke and climbed out of the hen-house and made for home, to find that Red Vixen, in sudden alarm, had returned to her cubs and had made another move, this time to an old rabbits' burrow under a great boulder, shielded from observation by a piled-up mass of broken stones.

The days slipped on. Sweetmart's cubs grew apace, and gambolled and played upon the wide ledge, while Sweetmart had her work cut out to secure enough food for them. It was all the more difficult because Red Vixen, not many hundred yards away, also had growing young ones, and she, too, hunted over the same country, and each rather resented the proximity of the other. Game was becoming decidedly scarce, with so many hungry little mouths to feed. But Red Vixen did not know that the circle her enemies were slowly drawing around her was narrowing day by day, until one day a tiny cub basking in the sunshine betrayed the earth.

The next morning Sweetmart, sleeping serenely among her cubs, heard the sound of hammer striking upon rock, and, peering down from her eyrie, saw men collected around the boulder, intent upon blowing up Red Vixen's earth. It was impossible to dig her out, so they were going to dynamite the whole. They had watched Red Vixen return to her nest, and would get

rid of the whole bag of tricks at one fell swoop. Sweetmart waited, belly flat, on the rock that formed the ledge, crouching with the stillness that only the wild know. The movements of the men were so mysterious, so strange, that she was fascinated. She could not make out why they drilled holes in the hard rock and slipped long finger-shaped packages into them.

Red Vixen lay trapped in her earth. She had felt so secure that she had never feared that anyone would find her out, and now the shrill noise of metal striking upon metal startled her almost into a frenzy. She snarled savagely, gazing around her prison with wild-eyed alarm. Then, with an energy born of despair, she dug desperately into the earth away from the sounds of men. She tunnelled madly, almost burying her cubs in the showers of earth she threw behind her. Stones and roots were dragged out of the way with her teeth. The burrowing seemed never-ending, but at last she had dug a way into daylight, and cautiously crawled out into a tangle of bramble and a cavern formed by the roots of a half-dead tree. A thicket of hazel bushes flanked the rear, and a weathered old pine, bent under the stress of many a bitter winter storm, leant wearily towards a tall ridge of boulders, that were really a spur of the huge bulwark of limestone that crowned the top of the high fell in which Sweetmart had made her nest.

Red Vixen gazed around her with terrified eyes, yet, in spite of her terror, all her native cunning was rampantly alert. She eyed the rough trunk of the ancient pine, measuring every leap and jump with a critical eye. Then she darted into the earth, and, carrying out her four cubs, laid them hastily under the shelter of the hazel roots, and, seizing the eldest by the scruff of his neck, leaped high against the pine trunk, scrambling upwards until she gained the support of a great branch. The cub was heavy, but hung passively. His sublime trust in his mother saved his life, for the least struggle on his part would have precipitated both among the hazels growing thickly below. Higher and higher she climbed, until she reached the branch that bent over the ridge of boulders. Then she lightly dropped on to the rocks. Hurriedly she sought a leaf-filled crevice, and, having deposited the cub in it, she hurried back to the pine. Alas, it was impossible for her to return the same way. She jumped and

jumped, but in the end had to abandon her efforts.

She ran along the edge of the boulder, gazing down at the ground that lay thirty feet below her. It was a sheer drop, and seemed utterly impossible of accomplishment. She could see the men, who were too busy with their work to look up and see the wild-eyed vixen that gazed down at them with terrified eyes. For a few seconds she raced up and down, then, having selected a spot out of sight of the men, she hurled herself downwards right into the heart of a hazel clump. She landed breathless and shaken, but the top of the hazels had broken her fall, and, sneaking forward with the silent tread of the wild folk, she picked up another cub and carried it to safety. The journey was repeated again and again, until all the little cubs lay, snug and safe, in the leaf-filled crevice on the top of the rocks.

Jem Hudson laughed heartily as he tramped home the last charge, saw that the faggots and turf that stopped the earth were firmly fixed, and, setting a light to the fuse, stepped back. He was positive that Red Vixen was safely cornered at last. He did not look up, or he might have seen the tip of her nose peeping out from a patch of dried grass that grew in a rift in the rocks. The men walked away for some distance, and then sat waiting for the fuse to burn down. There was an earth-racking explosion that sent Red Vixen bounding away in terrified alarm, and Sweetmart, thoroughly startled at such an unexplainable event, sat up in her nest and snarled loudly, chattering with sudden anger.

The flying stones and dust settled down, and the men returned to the earth, but gazed with astonishment at the wreck in front of them. There was all the *débris* of a fox's home, the scattered remains of many geese and fowls, pheasants' wings and legs, and gnawed bones that suggested other game, but there was no sign of Red Vixen or her cubs, and when spades were brought, the digging out of the tunnels showed nothing. For the rending rock had completely hidden among its fragments the new tunnel Red Vixen had dug and through which she had carried her cubs into safety. Even when the dogs were brought, they could not elucidate the mystery, for they only barked frantically around the roots of the pine and hazel trees, and the men, looking critically at the pine trunk, declared that the scent was a false one, and not a living fox

could have escaped in that direction; it was frankly impossible. Discontented and grumbling, Jem Hudson and the men walked off to their homes, and it was only when they had disappeared that Red Vixen ventured to creep back to her cubs, who, discontented and unhappy, lay huddled in a strange nest. It was quite a week before Red Vixen recovered from her alarm and once more resumed her harrying of the countryside. By that time the scanty supply of small game that lived on the top of the boulder ridge had become exhausted, and four extremely hungry little cubs demanded their full ration of food with no uncertain voice, and Red Vixen had really very little choice in the matter.

Sweetmart had viewed the invasion of her domain with annoyance, and relations were rather strained between the two mothers. Neither trusted the other, and so it came about that when one of the boys from the village, climbing up from the back of the boulder's ridge, happened upon Sweetmart's nest and carried off the three young things, she was fully persuaded that Red Vixen had killed them. In her frenzied grief she paid no heed to the manifest that the marauder had left, but, creeping stealthily to where the little fox cubs played, leaped savagely upon them, and when Red Vixen returned, later on in the evening, she found her cubs lying cold and still, and her rage knew no bounds. But Sweetmart and her mate were away out of reach, and she could only nose her dead cubs and frantically endeavour to bring them to life again.

Meanwhile Sweetmart, still smarting with the savage rage that possessed her, bounded down the fell side, and just as night came on found herself once more in the ravine beneath the terraces with their nestling cottages. She was bounding along through the darkness that lay on the road, when she suddenly stopped. From somewhere among the terraces echoed a weak, wailing cry. Sweetmart whirled around in a bound and dashed madly up the rocks, springing from one to the other until at last she came to a tiny cottage built against a rock. There was a sound of movement from the cottage, and the light from a lamp streamed across the rocks. Sweetmart, belly to ground, wormed her way nearer, taking advantage of every bit of cover. The plaintive cry came from the cottage, and, as she watched, a man brought the little scratching cubs out and placed



them on some straw in a kennel. Then he fixed a board firmly in front of the entrance, and, asserting that they could not escape, he re-entered the cottage and slammed the door to. A few minutes later the light in the window vanished and all was dark once more.

The thin, plaintive complaining of the cubs rent the air with shrill insistence, but Sweetmart lay as if carved in stone. She waited in utter silence until every sound in the cottage was hushed, then very slowly and cautiously she approached the kennel. She tried in vain to tear down the board that shut in the cubs, but it resisted all her efforts. She worked silently, and the cubs, conscious of her presence, no longer whimpered.

With infinite patience she pulled and struggled, seeking to drag aside the board. Every effort was useless. Then, just an hour before dawn, she pushed her way between the kennel and the cottage wall, and discovered that part of the woodwork was rotten. It did not take her long to tear a hole through the decayed wood, and she crept in to the waiting cubs. They would have fed with eager appetite, but Sweetmart knew the danger of delay, and hastily dragged one after the other through the hole she had made and out on to the garden path. There was no time to waste. The cocks were crowing loudly and someone moved in

the cottage. It was impossible in so short a time to carry the cubs one by one away, so, with little chirping squeaks of encouragement, she led them out from the enclosure of the cottage, up among the tangle of rocks and trees, and here she denned up for the day and fed her cubs. Perhaps she vaguely remembered the murdered fox cubs and the vengeance that Red Vixen might inflict upon her own family, for each day she took them a little further afield, until some miles lay between the boulder ridge and the secluded village in the ravine. Here they stayed until the cubs were strong and agile, and once more Sweetmart led them forth on a long trek that lasted until the spring came and the whole family dispersed to make homes of their own. But Sweetmart, strange to say, returned to the old boulder ridge upon the top of the high fell, and here in her eyrie, looking out over moor and sea, her second family was born. Red Vixen lived in spite of her many enemies, but she had forgotten that Sweetmart had killed her cubs. Yet, all the same, she had made her earth in such an inaccessible place on Haverbrack that no one attempted to dislodge her. It was a good mile and a half from where Sweetmart had her nest, and quite out of her district, so both dwelt contented, although it is doubtful if anyone else shared their feelings in that respect.

## SONGS.

**I BRING you all the pretty tunes  
That sing within my head—  
The wraiths of breezes on the dunes,  
The scent of berries red,  
The splash of little, singing streams.  
The shine of marigold,  
And all the beauty in my dreams  
The day can never hold.**

**I sing you such a lot of songs,  
To bring you smiles or rest,  
But to the Never-Land belongs  
The song you'd like the best.  
It's all the Wonder of the Tear,  
The Soul of Everything—  
The far-off, crooning tune I hear,  
But yet can never sing.**

ANNE PAGE.

# LORDS AND LADIES

By G. B. STERN & GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

"YOU promised to come at once if I summoned you wherever you were. Did you mean it? Come now. Am in great distress; you can help, perhaps."

Richard Spurnville Carew read this telegram three or four times; then he turned it about in his hands, after the fashion of strong men in perplexity, and tried reading it from right to left, instead of from left to right; and then, very softly, he said—what strong men in perplexity are, sometimes known to say under a hot sky at the beginning of summer. For this was May, and he was in Rome. He did not know from whom the telegram came. It had been forwarded to him from what he whimsically called his "permanent" quarters in London, though he had never stayed in them for longer than five consecutive days. The lady in distress had neither bothered to sign her name nor to convey a suggestion of her address. "This telegram," said the Meddler to himself, "is from a very conceited lady; for she thinks—Heaven help her!—that to her alone have I said that if she summon me I will instantly come. Now, I ask you"—and he must have been addressing earnestly the shades of many fair ladies, for he was alone in his room in Rome in May—"would that not have been unchivalrous in a man to promise his help, his aid, to one sole lady in a thousand, simply because he loves her? Dash it, what other way is there for a man to take a graceful farewell?"

And, indeed, "Send for me, and, wherever I am, I will come!" was no more and no less than the Meddler's conventional formula of good-bye; he knew none other. He never said: "So long; be good!" He rarely said: "Cheerio!" For, though these be degenerate times, Richard Spurnville Carew was not degenerate; he was a knight-errant.

He consulted the telegram again, and then he tried to pick out individual faces

from all those that came thronging into his memory, and to attach to these faces their voices, and to attach to these voices the words: "You promised to come at once wherever you were. Did you mean it? Come now. Am in great distress; you can help, perhaps."

There had been Cherry, whom he had assisted to climb a garden wall with bits of broken bottle on the top, and to burgle a house at two A.M. Could the telegram have been from Cherry? No, Cherry was too boyish, too jaunty—not the type that appeals for help. Then he recalled sweet Jenny Brown, Cinderella of the Brown family, whom he had married to a prince; and yet somehow he believed that Jenny would have said: "*Please* come at once!" Mrs. Brown would have taught her to say "please," even in a crisis. Sylvia, then? Lady Sylvia Berkeley, with whom he had once been concerned in an affair of seven pairs of brocade dancing-shoes. Or Vivian Martyn, rescued most resourcefully by him from dancing in the Paris cabaret, *Le Jardin de Ma Sœur*. But he had not loved Vivian, even ever so slightly, so that, though he had probably made her the usual promise at parting, a girl has got to feel instinctively that a man loves her enough before she calls on him to fulfil it. Princess Felicity of Penomia, that hale and hearty old lady who now so zealously followed the hounds in Rutlandshire, and who had learnt to speak with distaste of the coming of the "stinkin' violets"—Princess Felicity would have remembered to put her address on the telegram; she was a sensible woman. And Pauline? Pauline Wilmore, the novelist? Yes, it might easily have been from Pauline, had he not met her only yesterday in Rome at the house of another novelist, who was giving a party to yet a third novelist, who had hoped that Carew was yet a fourth novelist, which he was not.

Once more he read the telegram: "You can help me, perhaps." "Perhaps" sounded

very like Sylvia, strangely like Sylvia, that silver-witted, enchanting lady. Imperiously she might summon him, taking it for granted that he would come, but not taking it wholly for granted that he would be of any use to her if he did come. Yes, that was in the authentic note of his disdainful Sylvia. Who else would so subtly ignore all the women who might have counted in his life before—and even after—he had met her?

He packed a suit-case and left for England within an hour.

And within thirty-six hours he was in Mayfair; for this, you will perceive, is a high-class comedy, most elegantly staged; and if you have not already perceived it, the unemotional mien of the footman who opened the door will at once give the show away.

"Lady Sylvia is at home, sir."

"Tell her," said the Meddler confidently, "that a very travel-stained gentleman wishes to have speech with her urgently, for he is in distress, and she can help him, perhaps. And that," he reflected, "will show her that I have come a long way in answer to her appeal, and that I am thirsty."

As he was shown into Lady Sylvia's sitting-room, a girl brushed

such a fierce and fiery look that he knew she was seeing some other man where he stood, some other man with whom she was very angry.

"I *did* mean it," said Carew to Sylvia, for now they were alone together. And she smiled a little ironically.

"I am sure you did."

Then he produced the telegram: "'In great distress,'" he read out and confronted her with it. "How dare you say

you are in great distress, Sylvia? I have come from Rome, where I was enjoying myself immensely; but, like young Lochinvar, I stayed not for stock and I stopped not for stone, which is very difficult to



past him, leaving it. She was tall and slim, like Sylvia, but not, like Sylvia, ivory and ebony, with eyes the colour of the sea on a rainy evening; this was a bronze girl, and she had been crying. In passing, she gave Carew

say in a hurry. I swam the Esk river where ford there was none, and that, at least, should touch your ivory to warm humanity, Sylvia. Think of it—not a single ford!

And now you are not in the least in distress. You are smiling, you are clothed and sheltered, and your feet are dry. I am in a great rage with you, Sylvia. What is it you want me to do?"

Idly she read through the telegram. "How did you guess it to be from me?"

"And did you think," the Happy Meddler said reproachfully, "could you think that I had ever

ever made this promise to anyone but you? As a matter of fact," he added, not because he saw the delicately questioning lift at the corners of her eyebrows, for



"In passing she gave Carew such a fierce and fiery look that he knew she was seeing some other man where he stood, some other man with whom she was very angry."

he knew Sylvia was too well-bred to doubt his word, but just because he wanted to prove to her that he, too, had silver wits to match hers, "as a matter of fact, it was the 'perhaps' that gave you away. I am a psychologist, Sylvia, of no mean ability."

"Are you thirsty?" Sylvia asked him.

"Because, if not, you had better start at once; but if you are, I will ring for whisky, soda and ice."

"I *am* thirsty," said Carew.

"Straight for where?"

"Italy."

"My dear, didn't you hear me say that I had just come from Italy? You surely would not be so inconsiderate?"

But she was. Sylvia *was* inconsiderate. She distinctly meant Italy. And this was the story she told him, and this was the errand on which she sent him:

"On the fifteenth of May, Dick, it has been our—I will use a *cliché* and call it our custom immemorial to give a ball down at Brestock, to celebrate our wistaria in its glory. It is undoubtedly the finest

forgotten how, on parting from you, I had promised to come wherever I might be, at a single word of summons? Or did you imagine, *could* you imagine, that I had

wistaria in England. It trails along the terraces, and drips in great waterfalls of shining mauve, and its scent is as near a bath in heaven as I think one would ever get in heaven or out of it. So on the fifteenth of May, just before it droops and begins to think about fading, we begin to think about unselfishness, and loving our neighbour, and not keeping good things to ourselves. So we give a ball; and when we are not dancing, we walk in couples along the terraces, and small warm winds ripple over us and over the wistaria, and shake out its scent, infecting our flirtations with such clean ecstasy that we turn and kiss each other like brother and sister, all along the terraces, and this is a very moving sight, Dick, especially nowadays, which, like every other nowadays, is full of sin! So the papers say!

"Dick, I have invited a certain young man to my Wistaria Ball, and he is in Italy, and I am afraid he won't come. I want you to go and fetch him—that's all! Be very persuasive. I chose you out of all the crowd of men who, at parting, have spoken your famous only-summon-me-lady lines."

"Have other men——" began Carew consolately, and then checked himself at sight of the swiftly-glinting laughter in Sylvia's eyes.

"I chose you, Dick, because only you, of all of them, are gifted with a silver tongue. But, above all things, you must not mention my name to him. This young man, you see, might say afterwards: 'She had to send a messenger for me!' And then he would puff out his chest, and I should slowly begin to hate him. So it is your job to make him think that he is coming spontaneously. Talk to him, with all your eloquence, about the wistaria, and about the lords and ladies who walk on the terraces, and who, when the wind ripples along the blossom, kiss each other like brother and sister."

"All this is very fine and poetical," said Carew, "so poetical that I think you have forgotten the only prosaic point, which is, that to-day is the seventeenth of May, and however much I hurry in your cause, the young man will be late for your Wistaria Ball on May the fifteenth."

"I have postponed the ball for a week," Sylvia told him; and now she lay back on the cushions, and her head drooped as though she were suddenly tired and listless.

Carew stood up. He had had his whisky

and soda. The butler had come and gone noiselessly, as is the way of his tribe.

"I am ready to start. And, although it is not your habit, perhaps you had better enlighten me as to your renegade's name and address."

"His name is Lord Durley, and his other name is Ralph, which we pronounce to rhyme with 'safe,' you know; for that is one of the wicked, foolish things that aristocrats love to do to puzzle the honest *bourgeois*. As for his address, I don't know it, but he lives in Italy."

"Thank you," said Carew. "You can't narrow it down any more than that?"

"A resourceful man——" she began teasingly. "Well, but his letters have the postmark 'Porto Filipo' on them, and he says he has to carry them three and a half kilometres to the nearest post office, so that may help you; and his house is on a hill facing south-east, but not quite on the top of the hill. The olives are set very close and thick about it, and he can see the Mediterranean while he is digging; he says it looks a different colour seen through the twisted branches of the olives, from just ordinary sea beheld from Brighton pier. And he talks of a bay tree which stands up stiff and straight in his garden, with no leaves except a bunch at the very top. These are all the clues I can give you, Dick."

He nodded. "That ought to be enough. And what is this lord and this hero doing, in a little house among the olives, digging in his garden and occasionally pausing to reflect on the colour of the Mediterranean?" But then he rather wished he hadn't asked, for Sylvia's eyes looked as though he or someone had hurt her. Yet it turned out that it was she who had hurt herself, and that most foolishly, as even an enchantress will sometimes do when enchanted.

For this man Ralph had been one of the most brilliant and the most popular of all that brilliant, popular, reckless set which calmly does the Wrong Thing in the right setting, whether in Mayfair or Cowes or Scotland or the Riviera, except, perhaps, in war-time, when it went to do the Right Thing, but in the wrong setting. But he had moods, so Sylvia confided in the Meddler, queer, bitter moods, in which he posed as one who longs for hermitage and sighs for simplicity, and yearns for hard digging in the earth; by-the-sweat-of-his brow moods, which, of course, could not be tolerated for a moment unless they were sincere, which nobody believed Ralph could possibly be, for he

danced the ultra-modern waltz far too well, and the polish on his fox-trot was phenomenal. So his friends laughed at him whenever he voiced that harsh desire for solitude and work; and the girl whom he loved laughed more scornfully than any, so that he grew angry at last, saying he would prove to them and prove to her that he meant what he said, and that he was going at once. The girl whom he loved had mocked his hurry: "You will be back in time for my Wistaria Ball, I think, Ralph."

He had replied: "I think not."

To which she had further mocked him: "Oh, yes, I think you will, Ralph!" And this she had said in front of all the others, and they had all agreed with her. After seven months he would surely have had enough; if not long before, he would be back in time for her Wistaria Ball!

"Of course, he boasted in his letters, Dick; he boasted how he loved the new life, which is at least as old as Adam; what a success it was; how right he had been. That was nothing; I had expected that. But sometimes a word or two crept in that made me uneasy, Dick, for I know, you see, that, though dancing and one's friends and the life one has always led are strong things, yet roots and silence and a bay tree and the colour of the sea can be mysteriously strong as well; and even hard work, that can be a strong thing, too. I began to grow frightened that he would not come. There are other fools than April fools, Dick; there are May fools; and this was very near the fifteenth, and he had sent no word in his letters, and I should have been made a fool of in front of the Others. The Others play a rather large part in this story, though rightly they never should play any part at all. But we hate to be laughed at, and we hate to be pitied; and if he did not come to my ball after I had been so confident, some of the Others would have laughed, and some would have pitied me.

I wanted to make quite, quite sure whether he meant to come or not. So I had an inspiration. I postponed my Wistaria Ball for a week, from May the fifteenth to May the twenty-second, and I let all my guests know that I had postponed it—except, of course, Ralph—and on the fifteenth of May I sat down all alone on the terrace at Brestock, where the wistaria was very lovely and I waited to see if he would come.

"It was rather lucky, on the whole wasn't it, Dick, that I had postponed the

ball, even though the wistaria is now past its glory and has begun to lose its colour? Because now—I know. But now there is just time for you to travel out there and talk to him, Dick. How long will you need to talk to him? Two hours? Three? Remember, May the twenty-second, and try to let him arrive before midnight. You may come to my ball, too, if you like."

\* \* \* \* \*

The Happy Meddler chose not to be present, the following week, at the Wistaria Ball down at Brestock. He chose, instead, and most perversely, to sit on a bench, a very select bench, in a small but very select square in Mayfair, and, turning his back on the windows of Sylvia's house—for what was the good, as she was not there?—he cupped his chin in his hands, and gazed forlornly in front of him into the pallid spaces of moonlight, and gave way to forlorn moonlight reflections about Sylvia, and Sylvia, and Sylvia.

For he had no doubt but that an obstinate young lord would act on the recent instructions which he, the Happy Meddler, though not very happy now, had given him before they had parted, three hours ago, at Victoria Station. Just before midnight he would suddenly and dramatically appear in the doorway of the terrace hung and tasselled with the famous wistaria. Between one dance and another dance he would appear, when the shining parquet would be empty, and all the lords and ladies would be pacing the terrace outside, where the blossom hung like a dream of pale purple, rippled all with silver.

Carew could see, as in a vision, these very civilised lords and ladies passing up and down; tall and slim and disdainful, the ladies; and the lords very silent, for what was there to say between a dance and a dance? Already they had said, not once, but over and over again: "Wonder if Ralph will turn up, what?" And even, with an effort at sparkling conversation: "Sylvia 'll be fed up if he don't, y'know."

And Sylvia? He imagined Sylvia as a very gracious hostess, yet with her rain-grey eyes a little troubled. Could Dick be trusted to send him here in time? Not that she cared so much, but—

And then suddenly—there stood Ralph between the pale purple bunches of wistaria. Sylvia might not be the first to see him, lest he should think she had looked for his coming at all anxiously; she must

wait until another should see him first, and then a murmur running from lip to lip of those she called "The Others": "By the grace of Eros, he is here!" or whatever it is that noblemen exclaim in these moments of deep emotion. But Sylvia would exclaim nothing at all nor triumph at all. She would only come forward and dance with him. And so soon she would have to learn that Ralph had not come back, but had merely accepted her invitation to a ball, which is quite a different matter.

For, as Carew had persuaded him, it is impolite to make a lady look a fool if, by politely making yourself a fool for an hour or two, you can save her from it.

"In thirty-six hours I am going back, Sylvia, which will give us just time to get married, so that you can come back with me—yes, whether you hate it or not!"

He would tell her this while they were dancing on the shining slippery parquet floor to the shining slippery music of that highly civilised band known as "Quentin's." And then he would remind her of the last time they had danced together. . . . And Richard Spurnville Carew suddenly ground his heel into the gravel, and a spasm of anger drew his brows together. For why had Sylvia, so frank in everything else, not told him that she had been to that little house, where the bay tree with its crest of leaves on the top stood tall among a grey tangle of olives on the side of a hill in Italy? She had pretended to him that she had not seen Ralph from the moment when, at her taunt, he had left England to live alone and to dig in the earth, up to the moment she had imperiously sent for Carew from Italy, and sent him back to Italy on her fantastic quest.

It was Ralph who had told him. They did not speak of Sylvia, for she had forbidden it. "You were sent, of course," he had said, roughly, when the Meddler had duly delivered his message, of which the purport had been the postponement of a certain Wistaria Ball, owing to entirely unreasonable reasons, from May the fifteenth to May the twenty-second, "Which will leave you plenty of time, of course," said Carew, "for to-morrow is only May the twentieth." To which Ralph had replied, "She sent you."

It was not a question, but a statement. Carew held up his hand in quick protest. "Be merciful, please. If a certain lady's name is mentioned, even so much as the initial of her name, I shall be turned into a frog!"

"The initial of her name is 'S,'" said Ralph, and with some curiosity waited for the phenomenon to occur.

The Happy Meddler remained human in form. "No, I was wrong about the initial. But don't let it go any further, for there are frogs enough here and to spare." And, indeed, the whole night on the hillside was awake with loud croaking choruses.

"If we are to talk," Ralph said, "and it looks as though we were going to talk, it will be difficult to leave her out; but we will call her 'Madam X,' or in the style of Rider Haggard, 'She-who-must-be-obeyed,' or even, in the style of one Mr. Michael Arlen, 'That hopeful hopeless Lady' whichever pleases you. And I am *not* going to her confounded Wistaria Ball!"

And, after that, as the young man had prophesied, they did sit and talk in that dim room of vaulted ceiling and stone floor. And past the open doorway an early firefly trailed its glitter and was gone again.

"You don't care for dancing?" Carew had questioned casually. "Not for dancing with, let us say, a certain lady very like Circe must have been, and not at all like Helen, who was too gold and white for my fancy, but with a memory of Medea, that lovely dark young witch?"

Ralph laughed. "Why, I danced with her less than three months ago, out there on that patch of lawn. She told you, didn't she?"

"Yes," lied Carew; and a minute later, glumly and heavily, he said, "No, she did not tell me." And now he knew beyond question that Sylvia loved this man who would not come to her ball unless he were fetched—loved him enough to come to *his* ball, which was not a ball at all, but a fantastic, foolish affair of one couple on a patch of grass surrounded by twisted olives. For what lady but a lady in love would come all this way to dance, where there was no music except frog choruses?

"But she might have told me!" Why curse her beauty!—and did she, then, imagine that a man would travel to and fro between Italy and England, three times, perhaps, in twice as many days, to be told lies for guerdon? And as she had herself been here, could she not at least have told him the way, instead of prating elusively of 'three miles outside Porto Filipo,' and a bay tree for his only guide? He had wasted the hours between five and eleven o'clock finding his way here, and would never have found it had he not been a

gentleman of uncommon skill and competence. So, feeling childish as well as surly, and having no one there but Ralph to whom to complain, he did just say: "She might at least have told me the way!"

"I doubt if she knew it." And Durley laughed again, but joyously this time, as one who is pleased at some mischievous prank. "You see, she brought her car

only danced the length of an ordinary conventional ballroom dance, complete with all its formalities—why, then I blindfolded her and led her to the very outskirts of the olive groves, and then I turned her round three times to bewilder her, and left her."

"Why did you do that?" inquired Carew curiously.

"I did not want her to find her way here again."

"Why?"

"I wanted to be left alone."

"Why?"

"She disturbed me at my work," said Ralph.

And because, in his faded blue shirt, open at the throat, and his rough velvet breeches and his shabby old leather belt, he looked exceedingly powerful and muscular.



"'Good evening, ghost of Sylvia! How goes the ball down at Brestock?' 'I saw you from my window,' said Sylvia."

from Monte Carlo, as far as the road, two kilometres away, and then she wandered up and down these broken terraces like a lost soul, until at last, and mostly by accident, she found me. Perhaps she heard me cursing, for I had just bent up a corner of my spade against a stone, in ground that is mostly stones. And when she went away, not very much later—for we

and very like an illustration on the cover of those books that deal with strong men in conflict with the soil, Carew had taken for granted that he was doing well and successfully, and was wresting many splendid fruits from the ground, and so forth. And he said so, congratulating him. And Ralph had cried out sharply: "I've done no good at all. I'm a failure, I tell you, and I'm going to



chuck it. These—these —— *infernal* lords-and-ladies ! ”

And he buried his head in his arms, and sobbed.

“They grow everywhere,” Ralph had explained, a few minutes later. “Lords-and-ladies, weeds and parasites. They are in the very heart of the land ; they choked up my artichokes, and they are choking up the vines. Their roots go down for miles in the ground, long, writhing, sickly, white tubes. You think you have them up, but they break and grow again, millions of them. They swell into hateful, monotonous flowers, pale and green, like phantom lilies. My strength all gets sucked out of me, fighting the lords-and-ladies, and I am single-handed, and they are choking up my vines. I’m going to chuck it, I tell you. When is this Wistaria Ball ? On May the twenty-second ? There’s just time. Let her think she was right ; let them all think so ! I don’t mind. But they were wrong when they laughed ; I was *not* posing. In a queer sort of way I still find this sort of life good, and better than all others ! I could have done something with it if it hadn’t been for the lords-and-ladies.”

And brek-ek-kek-ek ! the frogs croaked scornfully, like a chorus from Aristophanes. Brek-ek-kek-ek ! Ko-ax-ko-ax !

Carew was glad now that he had come. For he saw, being older than Ralph, and not inclined to take despondency for an eternal mood, that the man was at an emotional crisis, and that another man’s warm heartening at this crisis would turn him back to his conflict with the lords-and-ladies, which eventually, no doubt, could be thrown out of the soil, and thrown out until they returned no more. And he saw, too, that having survived the crisis—which was less from lack of courage than a collapse of the nerves, which happens sometimes when the hyper-civilised turn peasant—what Ralph needed most, indeed, was a companion out there to dance with him sometimes, when his work was done, on the terraces of clipped grass outside the door of the house among the olives. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

The Happy Meddler did not hear a light footstep behind him, as he sat brooding by moonlight in that little railed square somewhere in Mayfair. So that when Sylvia’s hand touched his shoulder and he turned, and saw her wrapped in a long cloak which seemed to be of mist lined with flame, he was quite of the opinion that one need

not rise from one’s seat merely to chat with a wraith.

“I hope,” he said conversationally, “that this doesn’t mean that the real you is dead ? You are, I presume, merely a projection. I especially admire the way I can discern, through your transparency, the outline of the fountain behind you. Good evening, ghost of Sylvia ! How goes the ball down at Brestock ? ”

“I saw you from my window,” said Sylvia, and sat down beside him on the bench. “The ball ? I don’t know ! I decided not to go ; wistaria is not pretty a week after its glory.”

Carew gave his opinion that modern ways are all very well, but he believed in the old-fashioned style of a hostess being there to receive her guests, instead of wandering about conversing with stray lunatics in a railed square in Mayfair.

“My dear Lunatic, if you consulted *Country Homes and Country Lives* and *Our English Country Seats*, and others of these Society journals as often as you should, you would be aware that Brestock is the property of the Earl of Wenston, and that the proper hostess at the Wistaria Ball is his daughter, Lady Stella Paravane. You saw her for a moment, didn’t you, coming out of my room, just as you happened to stroll in with my telegram in your hand ? ”

Some elusive suspicion wavered like a drift of gossamer athwart the Meddler’s memory. He had meant to accuse Sylvia of something—what was it ?—directly he saw her. *What* was it ? . . . And then he remembered.

“Sylvia,” he thundered, startling her calm, “why did you lie to me ? Why did you pretend that you knew nothing of Ralph’s whereabouts, except that he was three miles distant from Porto Filipo ? Why didn’t you tell me, Sylvia, that one night you had danced with him among the olives outside his house ? Don’t you remember how the frogs croaked brek-ek-kek-ek ? ”

But Sylvia’s eyes were clouded with perplexity. “I have never——” she stammered, and this was the first time he had ever seen her at a loss for her usual lazy, mocking, silver-witted speech. “Never ! *She* did—oh, she *did*, and she never told me ! ” Sylvia cried aloud. “But I remember, she was at Monte, in February. . . . ”

“Who did ? ”

"Stella, Lady Stella Paravane, that slim bronze girl whom you saw. Oh, don't you understand, Dick? It was *her* story I told you, not mine. It was on her errand that you went; and if you succeeded, why, Ralph is now dancing at her Wistaria Ball!"

And the gossamer cleared away from Carew's brain, so that he now saw, sharp and clear like the ring of sword upon sword, how easily he could have been tricked, and how a certain lady of whom he and Ralph had spoken, sitting together in that little vaulted stone room in Italy, might equally well have been disdainful Stella as disdainful Sylvia. He did not ask "why" again, hoping that his own unaided understanding might catch at the clue and solve the puzzle. For it is a truth that all men hate to ask the way, whether from St. James's to Regent's Park, or when lost among a maze of ladies' motives and ladies' murmured hints; they prefer to go astray; they prefer to walk for miles.

But Sylvia stole a look at his brows hard knitted, and she remarked carelessly: "It seemed a pity to waste a willing knight-errant when he turned up so *à propos*! Stella had been waiting up all night and half the early morning, down at Brestock, to see if Ralph would come to the ball which she had postponed. And when he did not come, she just rushed up to tell

me about it; and then you arrived, Dick, from Italy. It was so easy for me to put 'I' into a story instead of 'she'!"

"It is not so easy," said the Meddler, without looking at her, "to put love—shall we say?—into a voice instead of friendliness—unless you mean love. *Why* did you send me, Sylvia?"

"To fetch a lord home to a lady."

"If you loved the lord, and if you were not the lady?"

"Why," spoke Sylvia very low, dropping her words softly like bubbles into the pool of moonlight at their feet, "why, Dick, did you bother to travel out to Italy to fetch home a certain lord to a certain lady, if you loved the lady, and if you were not the lord?"

"One is sometimes that sort of fool," said Richard Spurnville Carew.

And "One is sometimes that sort of a fool . . ." echoed Sylvia.

\* \* \* \* \*

But what Carew has never yet understood, and what Sylvia, subtly understanding the nature of a Happy Meddler, will not tell him, for all his teasing and persuasion, is why she ever sent him that telegram. He has never understood that to one story, and to one lord, there were three ladies—Sylvia, Stella, and that third unknown who *had* sent him the telegram.

*A further episode from the career of "The Happy Meddler" will appear in the next number.*





“‘Well, you’ll be off soon,’ said the porter’s wife, who arrived, hot and perspiring, from marketing at the same moment. ‘To-morrow,’ said Ann, and could say no more of it, though innumerable bright images fluttered through her mind.”

# ANN CLEVETT

By SYBIL FOUNTAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

**A**NN CLEVETT hurried through the crowds of Kilburn. To-day it mattered little to her that they were ugly and jostling, a pack of shopping women in mean, showy clothes, who pushed against her and one another in their efforts to see, and possibly purchase, another touch of smartness. Ann, in dark grey, looked shabby but neat, and she looked, too, every day of her forty-five years, and toilsome days at that. But in her purse were fifteen pounds and a ticket to Switzerland, and as she pressed it tightly under her arm, her heart leapt like a lover’s.

She came to the block of workmen’s flats where she lived.

“Well, you’ll be off soon,” said the

porter’s wife, who arrived, hot and perspiring, from marketing at the same moment.

“To-morrow,” said Ann, and could say no more of it, though innumerable bright images fluttered through her mind. That was the way with Ann. She inquired, instead, after the caretaker’s rheumatic joints, and spoke of the weather, then climbed the stone stairs to her own front door.

In her tiny flat her box stood ready for departure. It was an old little trunk, but Ann had polished the two brass locks until they seemed to wink at her.

Just as she had made tea, the postman brought her a big envelope. Inside was music to be copied. Her first inclination

was to send it back, but on second thoughts she realised that she could get it done in the evening, and could ill afford to lose the five shillings it would bring her. So she put on her glasses and set to work. It was a song, and very weak in places. Ann could have improved it and put it right here and there with an altered note or two, but that was not her business. She set her mouth grimly and went through with it, though it gave her every now and again twinges of discomfort and pain. "The more fool I," she thought, "for never having learnt to copy quite mechanically." She earned money by copying music, but principally by scoring, and giving lessons in orchestration. She would have liked more pupils, but few found her out, excellent teacher though she was. As a fact, so far as her knowledge went, she was much better equipped to teach her subject than many professors of the academies and colleges; but then who could imagine small and insignificant-looking Ann Cleveitt standing up before a class of students? On her shelves with her piles of music were two manuscripts of her own—one a book on orchestration, another a musical composition. These had been the round of likely publishers and had returned to her, as she thought with her odd little twist of humour, like homing pigeons. They were good, some publishers had the courtesy to tell her, but the market was bad.

Late that night she went out to post the copied manuscript. The starless, moonless sky hung like a murky cover above the grimy building which towered to shapelessness beyond the light of the lamps.

"To-morrow," thought Ann, and her mind soared out to shadowy mountains and a moon like a silver sea. It was ten years since she had been to Switzerland.

Fear that something would prevent her going hovered about her, fretting her pleasure until the train, with herself, her box and her tidily-strapped hold-all aboard, glided from Victoria Station, though what could have stopped her it would have been hard to say, for she had no near relatives to make claims upon her, and the people whom she knew were almost without exception clients and students.

The small white steamer puffed across a gay blue sea; then came Paris and the aching hours of the night, when she sat upright in a crowded second-class carriage with fellow-travellers who spoke of a *courant d'air* as of a grave danger, and insisted on windows closed against the peril. But

what do aches matter when you ache to some purpose? And Berne in the early hours, with coffee at the station restaurant, wiped out fatigue. By the time that she arrived at sun-baked beautiful Thun, lying on the lakeside, London and yesterday and the discomforts of the night had dwindled to pigmy size, and she knew the exultation which comes to some people at the sight of the mountains and the touch of the air that has swept past the secret everlasting snows. To look at her, with her thin, little face, which every one of the last ten years had pinched tighter, and her sparse little figure with the general effect of prim orderliness, you would never have suspected that she was capable of exultation.

Soon she was driving the last stage of her journey up a zigzag road, past waterfalls plashing from enormous heights, and glacial streams whirling in and out of great boulders which sent the spray dancing in the air, past pine woods and mountain reaches which in the springtime must be jewelled with flowers, till finally she arrived at the long, low hotel and stood shaking hands with the proprietor. Of course he remembered her, he said. "What are ten years?" And Ann felt what could ten years be, indeed, since nothing had happened to her in them, except a long stretch of work made more arduous by the War.

There were few people staying in the hotel. At dinner she noticed a German family, immersed from the start, shaven-headed father to the smallest boy of a troupe of children, in the solemn task of eating; two elderly Englishwomen of the type who frequent the smaller hotels and pensions of the Continent, and spend their lives in short constitutionals, knitting, and writing picture-postcards; a young couple who, from their sunburnt skins, looked to be engaged on a walking tour, and then, when the soup was cleared, an Englishman who came and sat at the table next to hers. She guessed his nationality, not because he looked particularly English, but because he didn't look anything else. "Which is perhaps as near," thought Ann, "as our mixed race ever gets to distinction." Individually the man was extraordinarily distinguished, if for no other reason, simply by being for almost everyone the handsomest man they had ever seen. Besides a remarkable perfection of face and figure, he had hair the colour of a golden sovereign and intensely blue eyes, which arrested attention. All the diners looked up as he took

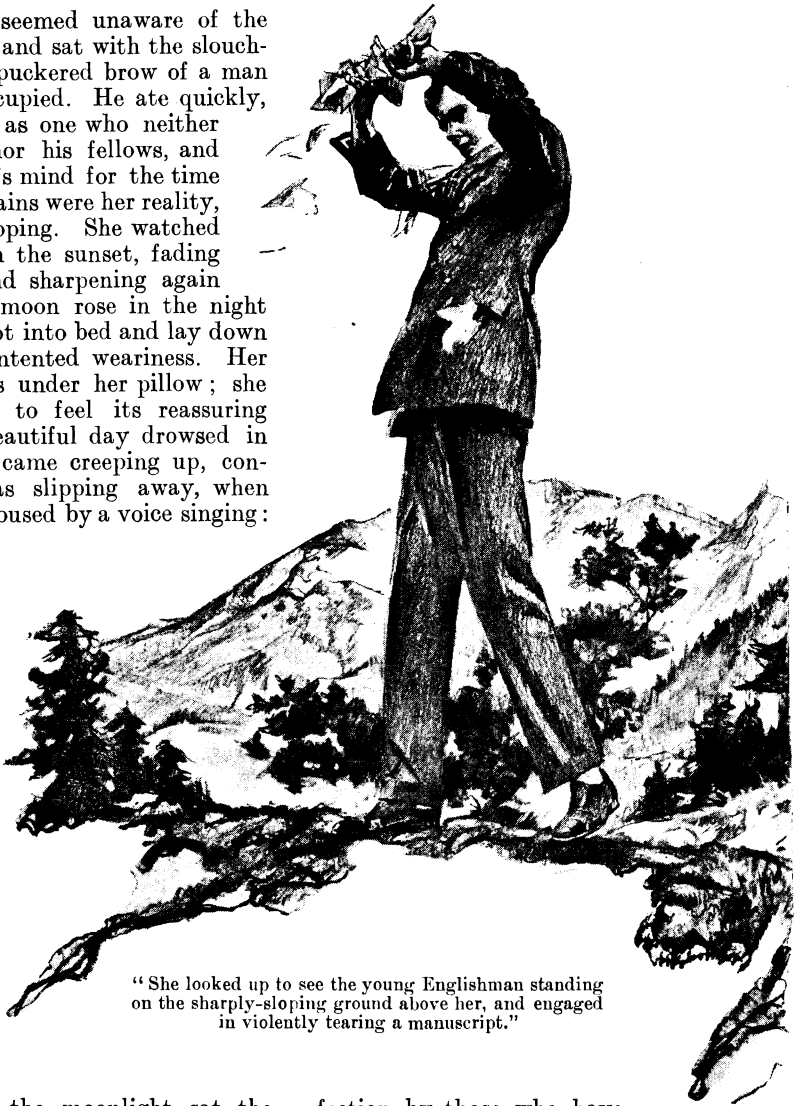
his place, but he seemed unaware of the battery of glances, and sat with the slouching shoulders and puckered brow of a man put out and preoccupied. He ate quickly, and left the room as one who neither noticed his food nor his fellows, and passed out of Ann's mind for the time being. The mountains were her reality, friendly and enveloping. She watched them reddening in the sunset, fading in the twilight and sharpening again in outline as the moon rose in the night sky. Then she got into bed and lay down with a sigh of contented weariness. Her bag of money was under her pillow; she put up her hand to feel its reassuring hardness. The beautiful day drowsed in her mind as sleep came creeping up, conscious thought was slipping away, when suddenly she was roused by a voice singing:

"Come live with me  
and be my Love,  
And we will all the  
pleasures prove  
That hills and valleys,  
dale and field,  
And all the craggy  
mountains yield."

The voice was a baritone of sweet quality; moreover, the singer was phrasing carefully and feeling the rhythm. The accompaniment was played, Ann thought, on a zither.

She padded across the room on bare feet to see, and there in the moonlight sat the handsome young Englishman, engaged, not upon a serenade, but in trying his hand at the strange instrument, while the hotel proprietor, who understood it, stood near, giving instructions. The Englishman broke into a laugh at the end of the verse, and played a few twanging chords. Yet evidently he was something of a musician. Ann reminded herself that she did not want to think of music; she was utterly weary and wanted a holiday as she had never wanted one before. Determinedly she got back into bed and went to sleep while the Englishman strummed on.

The next morning she awoke with a delightful feeling only known in full per-



"She looked up to see the young Englishman standing on the sharply-sloping ground above her, and engaged in violently tearing a manuscript."

fection by those who have a living to earn — the luxurious, rapturous feeling of having nothing to do. Three weeks as lazy as she chose to make them stretched before her, and she meant at her leisure to savour every enjoyable moment. She could see through her window dark green trees, grey rock, and snow-caps against the fine blue sky. There was no need to think, no need to move. Down the road came the tinkle of cowbells.

Presently she was hungry, and rang for breakfast. What a luxury for her not to prepare it, and to have no inevitable washing up hanging in her mind! The waiter brought coffee and rolls, butter and honey.

She lay in bed, idling most happily till half the morning was gone, then dressed in

leisurely fashion and strolled up the road. Turning into the wooded shade, she found a seat upon a lichen-covered rock. There were a hum of insects, the trickle of a stream—gentle, undisturbing sounds. Beyond the shade the sunlight danced and quivered.

A voice startled her.

"Confound the beastly stuff!"

She looked up to see the young Englishman standing on the sharply-sloping ground above her, and engaged in violently tearing a manuscript. A piece of it fluttered down to her and lay at her feet. It was part of a full score. She called up to him:

"Hi, hi, don't do that!"

"Why not?" he said. "It's mine and it's beastly."

"I dare say it is yours," said Ann, "and I've no doubt that it's beastly——"

"Eh?" said the young man.

"Since you say so," Ann calmly continued, "but it is a mistake to destroy your work in a hurry. It should be done when your blood's cool."

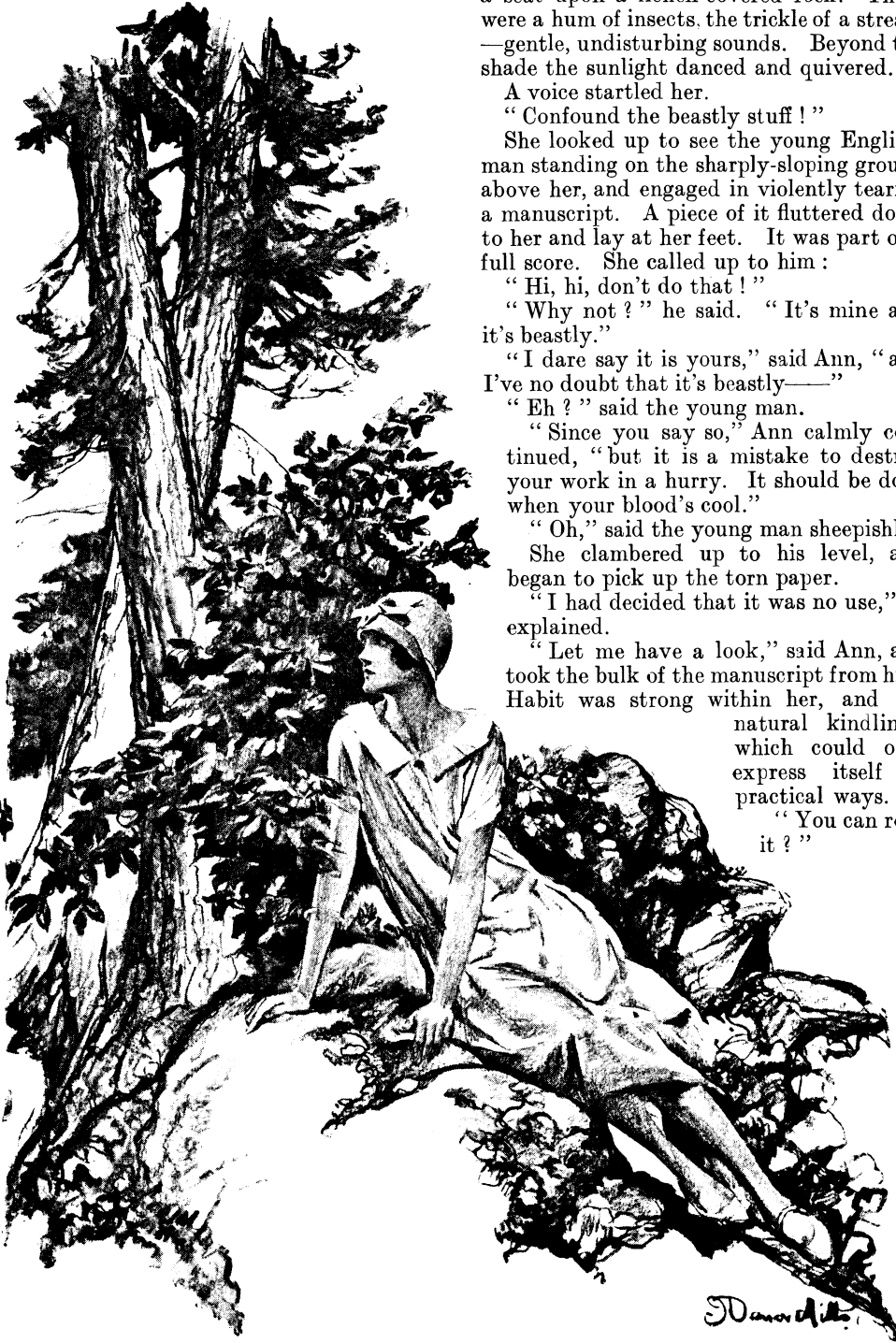
"Oh," said the young man sheepishly.

She clambered up to his level, and began to pick up the torn paper.

"I had decided that it was no use," he explained.

"Let me have a look," said Ann, and took the bulk of the manuscript from him. Habit was strong within her, and her natural kindness which could only express itself in practical ways.

"You can read it?"



*Danforth*

"She called up to him: 'Hi, hi, don't do that!'"

"Oh yes, I can read it," she said, with her tired brain coming swiftly into action. "I know the orchestra upside down."

"I say, what luck!" He looked at her with eyes from which all the dark distress had fled. Here was not just a fellow-creature, but a fellow-musician.

It was impossible to leave him without the help he needed and which was hers to give, although something within her dimly protested that she was very weary and wanted rest—some prescience, perhaps, of trouble to come.

They sat down, and he told her about himself, after the manner of men. He was the son of a country parson, and his name was Harold Dundas. A precocious talent for the organ had blossomed to genuine musicianship, and by the time he was nineteen he was generally supposed, at his musical college, to be a coming young composer. Then came the War, and at the end of that destructive period he found himself with a widowed mother and the necessity of earning an income. He went into business, joyfully at first giving his evenings to music. But the music slackened; he was so often too tired to write. Six months ago an uncle had died, leaving him enough money to live on. He had thought himself the most fortunate of men, wanting nothing now but paper and pencil and all the throng of ideas which had been stifled and turned back. He sorted out his old manuscripts and for six months worked at lightning speed. Then he took his music to Brader, conductor of many concerts. Brader had liked it, had been in some ways tremendously heartening, but he had advised him to go away for a time and re-work some of his orchestration.

"He thought well of it," said Ann, "or he would have given you very different advice."

"D'you think so?" Harold looked at her eagerly, asking for reassurance. To the excited young man there was something reassuring in Ann's sedate imperturbability.

"Yes," said Ann.

"I had got horribly depressed," he confessed. "I suppose I was an ass to stay here, but I had always wanted to see these mountains. I came for a holiday, and, finding there was a piano, I arranged to stay on. I thought I could work here. Really it's been a bit lonely." He smiled a little ruefully, ashamed of his outburst. "I'm glad," he said, "you stopped me making an utter fool of myself. I expect

some of this may be all right; it represents a lot of labour, anyway. I'd brought it out here to read it over, and suddenly felt that it was hopeless."

Ann was turning over the pages. "I'll go through it with you if you like," she said. "I dare say I could help."

"Rimskykorsakov to my Moussorgsky," Harold said impulsively.

They talked for an hour, peering into the score together, and by that time he was convinced of her capability.

As they walked home to *déjeuner* he said: "Will you really help me? You can give me all the knowledge I want."

"Yes," said Ann, without hesitation.

"That's wonderful of you," said he; but he hadn't an idea how wonderful it really was.

In a few days they had fallen into a regular habit of work. Harold had a room on the ground floor in which was the sometimes needed piano, and there they sat from breakfast until lunch, working away at the big score.

In the evening they generally worked again, but at smaller things, quartettes and songs or any of his many compositions. Tea they had in Ann's room. She had with her the necessary apparatus—spirit lamp, kettle, and so on. He waited on her charmingly, and gave her an easy comradeship such as she had never before experienced. She had known very few men and none well. When she arrived he had been morosely despairing; now, cheered and hopeful again, he became breezily friendly with everyone in the hotel, and Ann was drawn into the little society as, left to herself, she never would have been. But all the time she remained his particular companion and friend. He poured out all his difficulties, experiences, and dreams to her, though he never thought of breaking through to where her own dreams lay so deeply hidden away. Under her unchanged reserve the mountains, every precious remembered sight and sound and smell for which she had craved, sank to a background for Harold's work and Harold's personality. Never for a moment did she resent her changed holiday, but completely absorbed herself in making his music ready for performance.

Other people came to the hotel, notably a parson, his wife, and two jolly school-girl daughters.

"He'll get on," said Mrs. Blow, the parson's wife, one evening to Ann.

"His music is good," said Ann cautiously.

"His music!" exclaimed Mrs. Blow, as though that were a matter of little importance. "Look at his face! Who is going to resist that?"

"Umph!" murmured Ann non-committally.

"Well, can you resist it?" questioned Mrs. Blow, who was not to be put off. "I can't," she conceded, as an encouragement to Ann to enlarge on Harold's appearance or any subject connected with him.

Ann, however, was not in the habit of enlarging. "You think he will succeed because of his looks?" she said.

"I'm sure of it," said Mrs. Blow emphatically. "I mean that if his music were only passable, his looks would carry it off." She turned her stout and amiable person round towards Ann and beamed at her. "Hasn't he," she encouraged her, "charmed us all, even people like myself, who know next to nothing of music? He has such delightful manners and the most infectious sort of vitality." And then, since Ann said nothing, she swept on: "My girls have already extracted a promise from me to take them to hear the first performance of his symphony. You see, we shall be there."

Mrs. Blow flattered herself that she was what she called human. But then she was one of those fortunate people who are always flattering themselves about something or another. Some day she hoped to succeed in drawing Ann out, hardly realising, perhaps, how many years Ann had spent shutting herself in.

"What high spirits the young people have!" purred one of the elderly English ladies as round the bend of the road Harold appeared, racing the Misses Blow. He gained on them as the hotel came in sight, and passed a lightning-stricken pine which they had chosen for winning-post several yards in front of them. In a few minutes they were all before the long window which opened on to the verandah, the girls, still breathless, hanging on to his arms.

"He didn't give us enough start—he didn't give us enough start!" they chanted in indignant excuse for their defeat.

"They are like children together," thought Ann. He, she knew, was thirty. "He is a boy," she thought. "What is thirty?" It was a long time since she had considered her own age except as a fact interesting neither one way nor another. Now it seemed to her that the years had been like thieves stealing her youth while

she was unaware. Need they have done it? she wondered. And she looked at Mrs. Blow, who was about her age, with a new interest. It seemed to her that there was an expansiveness about Mrs. Blow—possibilities. "Whereas I," she thought, "have let myself get dry and wrinkled like a shrivelled nut. I don't feel dry, but then, when I feel anything, don't I cover it up quickly? That's morbid. And, anyway, how silly to start thinking about oneself!"

"Come and play to us," the elder Miss Blow urged Harold.

"Shall we play?" he asked of Ann, appealing to her, as he always did, as though they must of course co-operate.

"I'm always ready," said Ann.

They trooped into his room—the elderly ladies, for whom this meeting with a god-like young man, with what they considered must be a divine gift, was an immense experience, and the German father and mother, with two of the older children, who had not yet been sternly sent to bed, and the Blows, who felt their own superiority to the Germans so keenly that they were quite nice to them.

Harold sat and played. He had written any number of piano pieces, and he had a delicious gift for extemporisation. His glowing happiness in his recaptured art radiated from him, and he looked so extraordinarily handsome sitting there at the piano, with his head thrown a little back as he felt his way, and his strong golden hair shining in the light, that they were all caught up into his enthusiasm. He had felt lonely and unsure before Ann came, but she had put him on the right road, and he had learnt from her so rapidly that he almost forgot his former uncertainties. She knew every instrument, its possibilities and limitations as well, perhaps, as anyone has ever done, and she had taken the greatest pains to make her knowledge as much a part of his mental make-up as it was of her own.

The three weeks of her intended stay had already lengthened to seven. At a hint of her departure he had been all dismayed protests. The big score was unfinished and there were many things to tidy up. So Ann had sent for a store of money which she had kept for emergencies, and had stayed on. He had said to her: "I say, what about money, fees for lessons and all that sort of thing?" And she had brushed it aside with: "Don't spoil my holiday. I don't want to think of fees." As she watched him now, she



was conscious of a deep and growing happiness. She seemed at last to be using her abilities to some purpose.

"Oh, how wonderful to play like that!" said the younger Blow child, when he ended a piece he had lately written with an absurd glissade. And as he turned to them, glowing and confident, they all thought that it was very wonderful indeed.

The weeks sped until, towards the end of September, when nearly everyone had left but themselves, Harold said one day, as he handed Ann her cup of tea: "So tomorrow we're off. It's been a wonderful time."

"Hasn't it? And we've done good work."

"Oh, we have!" He looked radiantly fit and happy. "I can't begin to thank you," he said. "I hope my music will prove to be worth your while."

"I've enjoyed it," said Ann.

"We'll go to concerts together," he said, and added in an outburst: "Oh, I say, isn't life utterly ripping?"

They journeyed home together. Never before had Ann been so well looked after or made so comfortable. She had nothing to do but follow his guidance and be waited upon. As she watched the last visible snow-cap disappear behind the lesser heights, she told herself that it must necessarily be long before she could afford to travel so far again, and it didn't seem to matter in the least.

When they arrived in London he went off to stay with his mother, who was living with her widowed sister-in-law some way out of Town. He intended to find rooms for himself as soon as possible. Could Ann, he suggested, find something for him her way?

Four days later she had a letter from him, a long, cheerful, exuberant letter like himself. He had been to see Brader, and Brader had been amazingly kind, and was going to play the symphony at a concert in a month's time. What did Ann think of that? Ann, smiling to herself, thought that it was excellent. Brader, too, liked all the other things. It really seemed as though he meant to push them. And finally Harold was so sorry that he had not been round to see her, but Brader had kept him to lunch, and he had met Miss Relstead and her mother. It had been impossible to rush away. They were charming people. Ann, no doubt, knew them by name.

Ann, as a matter of fact, did not. At Smith and Fulmer's, a firm who provided all sorts of arrangements for small orchestra,

and for whom Ann often worked, she inquired of Mr. Smith if he knew of a Miss Relstead. He was voluble at once.

"Oh, yes, rather," he said. "Her family is immensely rich, for one thing. Haven't you seen her photo in the picture papers?"

"I never see the picture papers," said Ann.

"Oh, well, the Relsteads are keen musical amateurs, that's why I've noticed the photographs. The girl's reported to have a lovely voice. She's sung at one or two big charity concerts—that sort of thing. Haven't heard her myself. Anyway, they're influential."

"Well," thought Ann, "no doubt Harold will tell me all about these charming people."

But she didn't see him until the day of the concert. She wrote to him rather an amusing letter in a terse, dry way. She was better at writing than at talking. She gave him the address of rooms which she had seen in Hampstead. A day or two before the concert he sent her tickets. His plans were uncertain, he wrote, so he hadn't seen about the rooms. He was thinking of a concert of his works at one of the smaller halls. Wasn't it strange? His mother had discovered that Mrs. Relstead was an old school friend long ago lost sight of. Sybil Relstead was really a musician. Ann must meet her. He had spent a long week-end with her and her mother in their country home—the most beautiful place. Then, as a postscript: "Do come to the rehearsal, if you can, on Thursday morning at ten o'clock."

Ann tried to shake off the feeling of soreness which would pervade her. Why should she feel sore? she asked herself. Ridiculous! He was busy and happy, and the Relsteads would be delightful friends for him. Of course she wanted to go to the rehearsal. Hadn't she been over every note of that symphony? Hadn't she, to be honest, re-scored almost the whole piece? And she had never done anything better.

When she went into the hall on Thursday morning, Harold was standing near the platform, talking to a girl with the alert eagerness which Ann knew so well, and the girl was looking up at him, absorbed, it appeared, in what he had to say. She hadn't Harold's remarkable beauty, but she was pretty and young and fresh-looking, and her face was a clever, interesting little face, too.

He turned round to Ann, delighted at the

meeting, and introduced her to the girl—Miss Sybil Relstead.

"I'm so pleased that the symphony is to be played," said Ann. She heard her voice as dry and curt. She smiled, and they talked pleasantly, but she felt herself in some way remote, as though they were living and real, but the real Ann was someone faded and far away, someone who must be kept far away or she might behave absurdly.

The rehearsal went well. The symphony had charm; it was "taking," and it was well constructed, but it wasn't, as Ann had to admit to herself, very important music. Some of the orchestral effects were delicious. Perhaps that was the word for the whole music. Sybil Relstead was enraptured.

"I've told her how wonderful you were," Harold said afterwards to Ann, "and that I should have chucked the whole thing if it hadn't been for you."

"He exaggerates, doesn't he?" said Ann.

"As if he could ever have been anything but a musician!" exclaimed Sybil. "But I know how you helped."

Outside the hall a big car was waiting. A footman jumped down to open the door.

"You're coming back to lunch, of course," said Sybil to Harold.

He turned doubtfully to Ann, hesitating.

"I must go off and do some work," said Ann.

"When am I going to see you?" he said.

"You must come round to the flat."

"Really, I want to awfully. I don't know how it is that the days go. I shall see you to-night, anyway; you'll come round, of course."

Brader was playing a programme that night that drew, and the hall was full of people. When Harold came on to conduct his own music, there was a rustle and a murmur which ran through the crowd.

"There!" said Mrs. Blow, to whom Harold had sent tickets, and who, with her husband and two girls, was sitting near to Ann. "What did I tell you? Everybody is already talking about his face."

She smiled and clapped, and felt that she was almost responsible for all this because she had foretold it.

The symphony went well. Ann, knowing every note, heard every now and again something not just as it should be which made her clutch the arms of her chair, but Harold conducted well, and at the end

there was no doubt of his success; he was recalled again and again. People were charmed. The parson's daughters were in ecstasies. "We must go round and see him. Of course we must. He said we could," they clamoured at the end of the concert. They went round with Ann, to find an elated, happy Harold, the centre of a group of admirers.

Just while Brader was telling some story and taking people's attention, Harold had a moment's talk with Ann.

"Congratulate me," he said. "I'm the happiest man in the world. I'm going to marry Sybil."

Of course it was just the thing for him, and the girl did look the right sort. Ann's mind was swept clear of any other consideration.

"Splendid!" she said. "Splendid! I'm so glad."

He beamed at her. "But of course," he said, "she's got tons of money; that's the worst of it."

"I shouldn't bother about that. With money behind you, you can make quite a lot of yourself," Ann consoled him.

Sybil came forward to speak to him. Ann slipped back into the corner. The room was packed with people.

Sybil was saying: "We're going home to get drinks and things. Brader is coming, and lots of people."

"Excellent," said Harold. "Where's Ann? She hasn't gone, has she? She'd like to come, I'm sure."

"Don't you think she'll feel rather out of it?" said Sybil. And then, with a smile that was not unkindly, but only amused: "She's such a funny little thing."

"She was so awfully decent to me," said Harold.

"Yes, I know, darling. But you know you *mustn't* exaggerate what she did. People will think you can't write without help."

She laughed at that, and so did he.

Ann edged her way out of the room cautiously. He'd be upset if he thought she had heard—not that they had said much. She heard him saying as she passed two or three people deep at the side of him: "Yes, we are going to be married in a month. We're thinking of going to America for a time. Sybil wants to . . . Oh, yes, concerts over there, of course. . . ."

Ann took a 'bus home. She had always liked riding on the top of a 'bus at night. She clung to the things she liked. It was

a lovely night, with great clouds racing high across the dark blue bowl of the sky, veiling and unveiling the hanging fire of the stars. She watched them, clinging to her knowledge that they were beautiful. She was fighting back black loneliness. She thought she had fought it back years ago for good. She knew she mustn't let it engulf her.

She went up the stone stairs to her flat, glad of the wearying number of steps. Arrived, she put on the kettle for tea, and presently she was in bed, with a cup of it

by her side and a book in her hand. Perhaps sleep would come. If it didn't, she would read all night. The mountains had always brought her peace and happiness. She would save up and go to them again. But her mind turned back, dizzying at the thought of them.

"Very well, then," she said grimly to herself, "I can't think of the mountains, that's all, so I'll read—I'll concentrate. If I miss a sentence, I'll go over it and read it again. And haven't I got work to do—useful work, that will fill the days?"



## HIGH TAPERS.

**G**O you adown the long lane where the tall Mullein stands,  
 High tapers, bright tapers a-bearing in its hands!  
 'Twill light you to the healing leaves that grow around its stem,  
 With Peter's Wort and Simpler's Joy and Star of Bethlehem.

Oh, I know of the woodsage that buds anew in Spring  
 When the ground ivy trails its flow'rs and the clyders cleave and cling;  
 I know of Marsh Mallow grey enmeshed in cobweb skein,  
 And the tapers of the Mullein tall that lift above the lane.

But never a leaf from April to October have I found  
 To heal the broken spirit and salve the lover's wound:  
 And never a leaf for inward grief or green or grey I see  
 That will soothe away my sorrow and heal the hurt of me.

Yet will I go adown the lane where the tall Mullein stands,  
 High tapers, bright tapers a-bearing in its hands.  
 And I will kneel to the Hands that heal, the drooping spirit bind.  
 Give the oil of joy for mourning to the sad and heavy mind,  
 Beneath these golden tapers to stay awhile and pray  
 That He will ope the door of hope to me ere ends the day.

Alice E. GILLINGTON.



"He poured some of its dull yellow contents into the palm of his hand."

# THE SUNDOWN VISITOR

By H. MORTIMER BATTEN

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

IT was dusk of evening when the visitor appeared, riding one pony and leading a second, which carried his packs—a white-faced man, in all the incongruity of city clothing, even to a diamond scarf-pin. The ponies were spent, and the man himself bore every sign of having travelled far on the tag ends of his kit. He was a tall, bony specimen of humanity, and his ill-fitting clothing, weak chin, and heavy lips stamped him as somehow out of place in the rugged fastnesses of the North. But his greeting was cordial, and clearly he was glad to reach his journey's end. Visitors were few at Marmot Hill, but those who did happen along were sure of a good meal and warm

blankets at Jim Coke's cabin, whether Indian breed, priest, or prospector.

No invitation was needed and none given. Jim busied himself at once watering his visitor's horses and giving them a feed of oats and hay.

"It's going to rain," said he, "so they'll be best in the stable. My old girl knows the ropes, and can sleep out. She hasn't done a day's work, anyway."

They took the packs into the cabin, and soon the visitor was removing his boots by Jim Coke's fire, while an appetising aroma of onions, beans, and bacon mingled with the conversation.

"Here long?" queried the stranger.

"Two years," said Jim.

The other man grunted and dropped a boot heavily. "Lucky I saw your smoke," he observed. "Didn't know there was anyone about."

"Stranger?" queried Jim, with a raising of the brows—purely a compliment.

"Yep. Going west to Indian cache horse sales. My name's Sam Cole."

"That's queer," grinned Jim. "Mine's Jim Coke. We must be cousins. Buying horses?"

"Nope. Selling oddments."

The man went over to one of his packs, pulled it into the centre of the floor, and opened the lid. It contained a dazzling assortment of "oddments"—pocket-knives, packets of needles, shaving brushes, soap, beads, buttons, coloured handkerchiefs, and the various other articles likely to interest white settlers and unsophisticated Indians. Jim Coke was at once all interest, whereupon his visitor held forth a pocket-knife and a razor.

"Take one," said he, "whichever you want."

Jim Coke beamed his gratitude and took the razor.

"We'll have supper," said he, "then I'd like to look at them things. Suppose they're for sale?"

"Why, sure! That's what they *are* for."

Jim Coke was a simple-minded man, and looked it. His hair was absurdly fair, his complexion that of a schoolgirl. He had no eyebrows to speak of, and no teeth one could see, but his smile of benevolence upon his fellow-creatures was eternal, and the look from his steady blue eyes bore no guile of worldly things. Those who knew him loved him, though his name brought laughter to their lips as that of "every which kind of a sucking duck," and when he went to the city, his friends would solemnly warn him to look out for "wooden money," as there was a lot going about.

"Good country this," observed the stranger, as they wolfed the meal. "I washed a sample of sand in my hands when I was drinking down the crick. There was quite a showing."

Jim, who was excited as a child over the arrival of a box of toys, nodded gravely. "There's gold in all these cricks, if it's worth a man's while to sit down by it," he observed.

It was the other man's turn to nod. "I expect *you* get a showing," said Sam Cole,

after a pause, "or you wouldn't stay out here?"

He did not raise his eyes from his plate, but a man more astute than Jim would have felt that he was waiting keenly for the answer.

"Oh, yas," Jim drawled. "I washed out near six dollars a day last summer, but the present streak isn't so good, and there isn't much water. Still, it's better than punching."

"I guess so," agreed Sam Cole. "Better than peddling, too. Now come and take your choice. I'll sell cheap to you, cheaper than the store."

So Jim was engrossed, placing aside all manner of useful and useless oddments, while Sam Cole added up the items.

"Ten dollars fifty," said Sam at length. "That ought to do you. Pay me in dust if you like. It makes no difference."

"I'll have to," said Jim, and, going over to the stove, he stamped on a board, the other extremity of which immediately rose, giving him a finger grip. Removing the board he lay down and, thrusting his arm deep under the floor, drew out a deerskin sausage of gold dust. He poured some of its dull yellow contents into the palm of his hand. "I'm a good guesser," said he. "How does that strike you for ten-fifty?"

"It ain't short, anyway," said the other, with an indifferent wave. "But I don't reckon you're wise grovelling in your cache like that in front of strangers. You'll get tomahawked one of these times."

But Jim ignored the warning, for his eyes were upon a long green bottle his visitor was holding up to the light. "What's that stuff?" he queried eagerly.

Sam Cole drew a handkerchief from his shirt-front. "That?" he drawled. "Oh, that's just scent for the ladies!" He poured a goodly quantity into the handkerchief and sniffed it. "Real good scent, too," he added. "You smell."

He thrust the handkerchief into Jim's face, and Jim sniffed. As he did so, an iron hand gripped him by the back of the neck, while the fingers which held the handkerchief closed like a vice over his nose and mouth. Jim was conscious of the reek of a volatile drug, and he heard Sam's voice in his ear: "Smell it, you simple little devil! Take a good sniff!"

Jim had no alternative but to smell it. He was aware of a sudden singing in his ears, aware that the candle seemed to be waltzing round the roof, then darkness came.

As Jim's senses slowly cleared, he saw the other man kneeling beside him. Sam rose and laughed into his face. "You've been making the devil of a noise!" said he, with a click of the thumb.

Jim did not answer. He was not as yet in a mood for discussion. He was trying to piece things together, and slowly he grasped the fact that he was sitting up in the bottom bunk, his hands tied behind the corner post; also that Sam Cole was adding a final and entirely unnecessary half hitch to the remaining length of rope which originally had bound the packs, but which now served to secure Jim's feet to the bunk rail.

"Ain't you just a fool, to go and trust any derved son of a gun what breezes along?" pursued Sam Cole gloatingly. "I heard all about you at the city, and what a sucking duck you are! So I just came along to do what I liked. You don't reckon a man like me lives by selling candies and collar studs, do you?" And Sam Cole laughed boisterously. "Nope, not on your life!" he pursued, leering down into Jim's face. "I lives by duping such ninnies as you! That's better than all your peddling."

Jim cleared his throat. "There's plenty come along before you," said he almost tearfully—"men who ate my grub and shook my hand, same as you did. I hadn't any special reason for thinking you a crook."

Sam Cole raised his big hand, and a nasty look came into his eyes. "See here, sonny, don't you go calling me names," he advised, with a slight quivering of his weak chin. "It's me who's riding the high horse, and you want to be kind of respectful!" He seized Jim by the nose and wrung it violently.

"It was you who said you was a crook," Jim pointed out, "not me! Oh, no, not me! I don't think so. Of course I don't. I couldn't, could I?"

"That's better," said the big man, turning his back. "Now we can get on with business. We'll just have a look at that cache of yours, since that's what I'm here for." He strode towards the stove, but midway he turned abruptly. "First of all, we'll just make sure there ain't any other cache," said he. He went back to Jim. "Is there another cache? Eh, you little devil? Is there another cache?"

His wiry fingers closed on Jim's kneecaps, and Jim realised with sudden anguish that this unshaven thug might prove a past-master in the art of the inquisition. Something, moreover, in the man's eyes told Jim

that he would delight in torturing a fellow-creature.

"Quit that," Jim shouted, "if you want any word from me! Now I'll tell you. No, there isn't another cache. All I've got outside the bank is in the cache behind the stove."

"We'll see," said Cole, retracing his steps. "If it isn't, Gawd help you, my son! I'll give you jip! But we'll see what is there first. It's five weeks since last you were at the bank, and I know just about what there ought to be."

"Perhaps you do," replied Jim, "but you don't know what there is. Anyway, help yourself. It's your show. I'm only a spectator."

"Yep," replied Cole, now on all fours. "That's about all you are, and all you ever will be—a spectator—while it's left for men like me to put up the show. Just think of it, now. Ain't you a fool, to go hiking around this all-fire north country rocking your derved cradle and emptying the sluices, when, if you'd got the brains of a spruce-bug, you might step in and lift the lot with never a drop of sweat!"

But Jim's eyes were turned towards the rafters. "Go on," said he. "Lift the lot and let's be quit of you. It's all there."

Sam Cole croaked a wheezy laugh, then he bumped the board, which immediately sprang up to meet him. He struck a match and peered into the dark aperture below. He saw the long deerskin sausage and other sausages arranged in orderly fashion beside it. The sarcasm died from his face, to be succeeded by an expression of savage greed. Jim saw the gold lust in his eyes, saw the sudden trembling of his weak chin, the twitching of his fingers, then the thief threw himself down, thrusting his arm full length into the cache.

In an instant it was over, so far as it went. There sounded a dull thud, and an animal cry of surprise and fear broke from Sam Cole's lips. He remained full length on the floor for several seconds, then he began to struggle and to scream—yes, scream. It rang in Jim's ears for days after, for animal sounds from human lips have something strangely haunting about them. It bore the desperation of the trapped hare, together with weak human cowardice, which was horrible to listen to. Meantime Sam Cole cleared an area with his legs, all but displacing the stove, and the cabin rang.

Jim waited till the first outburst was over, and Sam lay temporarily exhausted. Then

in the coolest of tones he began to speak. "You've been making the devil of a noise," he said. "You kind of remind me of a

you out. You take that from me. No, not till the ants eat you, and your bones lie bleached! You'll have to stay right there,



"Sam, she's trying to untie the knot, Sam, as she used to untie her halter. She's got the idea. She's going to set me free!"

school-girl I once saw what was stung in the ear by a hornet! Anyway, go on! It's your show. I'm only a spectator! Go on enjoying yourself, you derved clever son of a broken-handled muck-shovel."

There was a pause, then: "Let me out, Jim! It's breaking my—wrist!"

"Hur!" grunted Jim Coke. "Pity it ain't your neck! This country would be so much the better if it were. Now keep quiet while I give you a talking to."

"Oh, quit your talking!" rejoined Sam Cole, having recovered his manhood a little. "You wait till I get at you! I'll flay you alive for this trick! I'll——"

"Yep," interposed Jim, "if I wait, but I'd have to wait a long time. You never *will* get out, old son, unless someone lets

held by the hand, and it seems I'll have to stay here, so we may as well talk things over. I'm quite comfy, thank you."

"Don't thank me," quoth Sam Cole, punctuating every word with an entirely meaningless adjective. "You wouldn't be comfy if I could get at you! I'll make you pay for this!"

"Maybe," replied Jim, "but just try to be a little more respectful. Remember I'm riding the high horse. I've got you trapped like a coyote, and you don't stand a chance of getting out. I *do* stand a chance, and, when I do get out, I shall just amuse myself by plucking you, hair by hair, till you're as bald as a scalped priest!"

There followed more oaths and much struggling. "It's getting hot, I suppose,"

chuckled Jim Coke. "But it isn't half so hot as it's going to get. I made up the stove just before you doped me. It'll be red hot in about five minutes."

And so it was, while Sam Cole, within a yard of it, writhed and cursed and fought with the fury of a wild-cat. Even Jim writhed in sympathy, and would have released him if he could, but, bound hand and foot, he could do nothing. He thought the man was going mad, but at length the gruelling heat subsided. Sam's cries

Manliness!" jeered Jim. "I'm a simple son of a gun, I know, but I'm not half so simple as you are, thinking any prospector would leave his cache open to a mountebank like you, whose very face is a nightmare of sin! When we stood face to face as neighbours," Jim went on, "you was all suaveness and honey. Then, when you'd got me down, tied hand and foot, you began to tell me what a big man you were and what a worm I was. You, a man, mark you!" And again Jim chuckled luxuriously. "Your kind ain't men," he went on with spirit. "I never yet met a thug who was a man at heart. No man would trade comradeship, then, by telling a lie, dope the man he was trading on. I may be a silly-looking swipe what the boys laugh at, but if I weren't a better man than you, I'd go straight down to the creek and drink till I burst! That's true.



sank to groans, his groans to gasps of exhaustion. Then again Jim began to speak.

"Now shut up!" he said. "You've carried on so far like a hysterical kid, and that's about what you are. I know your kind—all hot air and talk, rotten and soft as pine bark inside, but so long as you're on top you can boast and kick the man underneath, and talk about your own manliness!

"Listen, now," Jim pursued, after a pause for breath. "I've read a bit at times. I've read about the leeches in the swamp that stick to the legs of the niggers. You're like them 'cept that, being a white man what lives in the mud, you ain't fit to stick to the niggers' legs! All the same, you get in the way by always sticking to the legs of



someone who's trying to do something worth while."

There was more writhing by the stove, and an unprintable string of epithets from Sam Cole. "I'll make you sweat for this," he added.

"Don't talk about sweating," Jim advised. "I reckon you've done enough for one night. But I was telling you about leeches, and that reminds me that in some parts of the world there are dogs—pariah dogs they call them—which live by the garbage heaps and sneak about the alleys in the small hours, slinking with their tails between their legs. Dirty, cowardly, mangy brutes they are, which run if you look at them, yet they will sneak up behind a child or a woman at night time and pull her down. Believe me, Sam Cole, such as you ain't fit to touch the mangiest, slinkingest pariah cur which ever tried to stalk a baby! They're what they were made—you ain't! You may have filtered with the scum and the grease through the sink of some rotten city of the East, but, anyway, you had a mother, and there were decent men all round if you'd wanted to join them. That's something of what I think of you, old son. You've called me one or two names to-night, which all belong to you and on top of 'em a pile of filth which no decent man would ride his horse over!"

There was a pause, then Sam Cole said grimly: "That all?"

"No," replied Jim. "I could tell you heaps more, if you liked, but it would be a pity to tell you more than you can remember. Now, what about it?"

"What about what?"

"What about you and me?"

"How can I get out?" queried Cole doggedly.

"There's only one way," replied Jim. "Either you lie there till the roof rots over you, or you do this—you put a knife in your pocket a little while ago. Take it and cut off your hand above where the trap holds you!"

There came a shuddering cry, the sound of a blasted hope, then silence.

Jim laughed. "It's a pity you took the trouble to tie me up so securely, isn't it?" said he.

The other man did not answer, so at length Jim went on. "I don't envy you your position, Sam Cole. I'm safe on the bunk, but you're on the floor, and you know what that means. It's just beginning to rain. The snakes will see the light and

come in for warmth. There's a whole outfit of copperheads about the place, and they're sure to come in. They always do if the door's left open. You'll have to keep dead still or they'll finish you!"

Sam realised the dreadful likelihood, and again he stammered out: "Can't I get free? If I can, I'll play fair! That's a promise!"

Jim laughed. "Devil a lot of good a promise from you!" he said contemptuously. "You gave me a promise when you accepted my grub and shook my hand—that is, for what a man's promise is worth in a land of men. We live clean out here. Worse still, you lied to me, then called me a fool for believing you—for not understanding that there are such contemptible swine rooting up God's earth! I reckon the cache robber is lower than sin, and—gee, fancy you having the lip to offer me a promise!"

Sam turned with a groan. "Anyway, how can I get free?" he pleaded insistently.

"You can't, except by the way I told you," was Jim's inexorable answer. "A grizzly couldn't get free from that trap. It's a grizzly trap—a Number Four Whitehouse. The harder you pull, the keener it locks. There's a spring pressure of four hundred pounds, and it would have taken your hand off by this but that the jaws are padded with flannel. As it is, it won't even cut you, but you'll never, never get free without the trap key, and that's in my pocket—in my pocket, yes, and my hands are tied!"

"What's going to happen, then?" Sam whispered.

"I don't know," replied the other man, "but I think this will happen. The copperheads will come in to-night, and they'll lie close up against you for warmth. If you were a man you'd live, and they'd go away in the morning, but being as you aren't a man, you'll kick and scream, and they'll bite you, and you'll swell up and die! Then I'll get annoyed with you because you won't speak. I shall sit here and sit and sit, tied as you fixed me, till I begin to rave of thirst, and when the rangers come along, maybe next fall, they'll find the two of us minnies under this 'ere roof! That's what I think's going to happen. Cheerful, ain't it?"

"Can't you get free?" queried Sam. "Can't you loose just one hand?"

"No," chuckled Jim. "You made sure of that."

There sounded the pitter-pat of rain on the roof and on the window, growing louder and louder, till presently the unbroken hiss of it filled the cabin. The room became chill, the candle flickered, the hiss without grew almost to a roar, and as the air turned colder Jim contrived to work the blankets over his knees.

"Sam," he said presently, in a subdued whisper.

"What?"

"There's a copperhead sliding in at the door! I can see her eyes. She's working along the angle, straight towards you! She's going to lie up against you for warmth and company. She'll be in good company for once, but—keep still, for Heaven's sake, or you're done!"

There was no answer, only the heavy breathing of Sam. Five minutes or so later he spoke. His voice was tense, feverish, almost frightening in its subdued cadence of fear. "It's gone up my sleeve!" he said. "I can feel the whole cold length of it! Oh, Heavens! I can't stand it!"

"You must," came the quiet reponse, "or die! Think what it means. I don't want to hear you scream and see you all swell up. If you're a man, be a man now. Keep still. It's your only chance."

An hour passed. The rain subsided, the candle was all but done. "Jim—oh, Jim, for the pity of Heaven! They're all round me and under me! I'm going mad!"

"Shut up, you fool!" said Jim Coke, and then he did a thing which never before in his life had he done. Looking a fellow-being straight in the eyes, he told a lie. "Sam," he said, "they're not copperheads at all, though there may be a rattler among them. There ain't any copperheads in this valley, nor yet moccasins. Keep still in case there may be a biter, but don't go getting scared silly!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Two days later the men were on a common footing. "It's the whinnying of them horses gets me," said Sam Cole. "They want water, poor devils—water, oh, Heavens! Water!" He struggled again to free himself, but only for a moment, sinking open-mouthed to the floor.

"Why don't they kick down the stable door?" Jim muttered thickly. "It's a rotten old door. They could easy do it. I know. I made it."

"Why?" muttered the other. "Why weren't your snakes copperheads, or

rattlers, or anything you like, what could have struck me dead? I wish to Heaven they had been! One of them has laid an egg in my sleeve, and left me to hatch it. It's hatching now!" And he began to wriggle.

"Go on!" replied the man in the bunk. "You're imagining things. If it weren't for these infernal flies, and me unable to scratch——"

"Flies!" shouted Sam Cole. "It's Death we're up against, not flies—Death, that must come to all men, and will soon level you and me to the dust!"

"You never was above the dust," interceded Jim Coke.

"And you?" quoth Sam. "Are you so clean that you don't mind kicking it?"

"No," drawled Jim thoughtfully, "I ain't. But if I've got to kick it, I've got to, and there you are. I ain't scared unduly."

"You're lucky," muttered Sam Cole. "I am! I'm scared—yes, scared as a kitten—terribly scared. But I tell you this, Jim. Let me get clear of it, and I won't be scared. Give me a run, and I'll clean up. A man can't stand face to face with Death so long as we've done," he went on slowly, "then go back to the pariah dog and the leech stage!"

Jim grunted. "It's canned milk and the mission stations for you!" he prophesied. "They'll take in any half-witted skunk that wanders towards the candle-light! And you'll keep your candle burning? Personally I wouldn't trust it five yards from the stable door on a windy night!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Just this. That I never yet met a man wearing city clothes so far West as this that was worth a cuss! You ain't worth a cuss, and never will be!"

It was just a plain, candid statement, given without spirit, without venom, but as a quiet home truth, and thereafter Sam Cole wept long and bitterly.

There followed another long silence—an hour, five hours perhaps. Time had ceased to have a meaning, but at length Jim cleared his throat as the clump-clump of hoofs sounded outside.

"She's coming to have another look at us," he remarked.

Then the door darkened as Jim's old mare sauntered in. She stood at the threshold looking from one to the other, then she came slowly on, dodging the various articles, till she was beside her

master, and again she sniffed his face sympathetically. Her nose followed down the length of his body, pausing at every hitch of the ropes till she reached his feet. She came back to his hands, sniffed the rope, her teeth closed on the knot, and she jerked it. Jim's hopes rose, but almost immediately she turned and sniffed the other man. Evidently she did not like the smell of him, for she snorted loudly and returned to Jim.

There was a breathless pause, then a breathless whisper. "Sam, she's trying to untie the knot, Sam, as she used to untie her halter. She's got the idea. She's going to set me free!"

And she did.

\* \* \* \* \*

Three days later they parted, and the man who went his way East in his city clothing was white-haired and bowed.



## MOONSHINE.

**W**HEN careless Jill-the-Moon lets slip  
 A-kimbo pails from either hip,  
 Then on the ocean tides are tost  
 The silver gallons she has lost.  
 The sea-girl there will gloss her scales  
 In silver from the tumbled pails,  
 And lave in light her weedy gown  
 To lure the dazzled sailor down.

"O sailor, come!" the sea-girl sings  
 With bubble-breath that breaks in rings,  
 With bubble-breath that breaks in tune  
 But cannot reach to Jill-the-Moon  
 Who holds a-kimbo pail and pail  
 And follows on the starry trail  
 Of herds that crop the grass and stray  
 In meadows of the Milky Way.

WILFRID THORLEY.

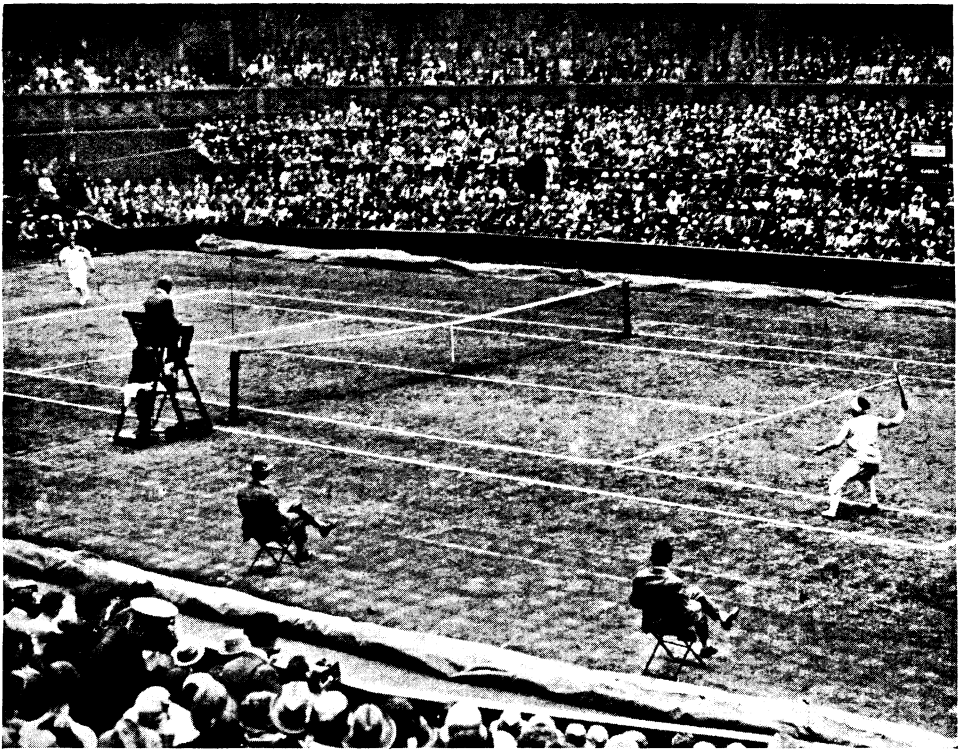


Photo by]

[Sport & General.

MIDDLE. SUZANNE LENGLEN v. MISS JOAN FRY IN THE LADIES' SINGLES FINAL AT WIMBLEDON.

# HEADWORK IN LAWN TENNIS AS ILLUSTRATED IN THIS YEAR'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

By F. GORDON LOWE

THE casual visitor to our championships does not realise the amount of thought, hard work, and time that even the humblest competitor at Wimbledon has been obliged to put in. He would not have been admitted to a coveted place in the lists if he had not! Every match which is played at Wimbledon is won not merely by hitting the ball over the net, but by seizing opportunities and bringing into play just the very strokes and qualities which are best suited to defeat a particular opponent. The gallant fight of a loser is often well worth a careful study when he will try every possible ruse

to overcome a powerful adversary and to stem the tide of defeat. In this connection I recall the matches in which Hennessey, the young American, so nearly overcame Cochet, or when Lycett fought so gallantly against Lacoste.

The general aspect through which a player must view the game is gradually changing, a different kind of headwork is required nowadays. Previously it was not so much a question of pace, but of manœuvring for position and of fighting out long rallies. A man must now think more quickly and be ready with some adequate reply to the powerful modern service. The

deliveries of Casey, for instance, call for quick action on the part of the striker, even such an adept at returning the service as Lacoste discovered this. There is only a fraction of a second for the striker to make up his mind what he is going to do. In the old days the service was less severe, not so quickly followed to the net, and the second delivery was considerably slower than the first.

The modern tendency to hit the ball on every occasion at the earliest possible

essential for success. There were no finer stroke players than Brugnon, Von Kehrling, or Morpurgo competing at Wimbledon this year: indeed, Brugnon, without exception, can be said to possess the most elegant execution and artistry of style of them all, yet up to date he has lacked that "indefinable something" which seems to mean the just winning, instead of the just losing of matches.

Players with a set drive, such as Anderson and Washer, do not have to use their hear's

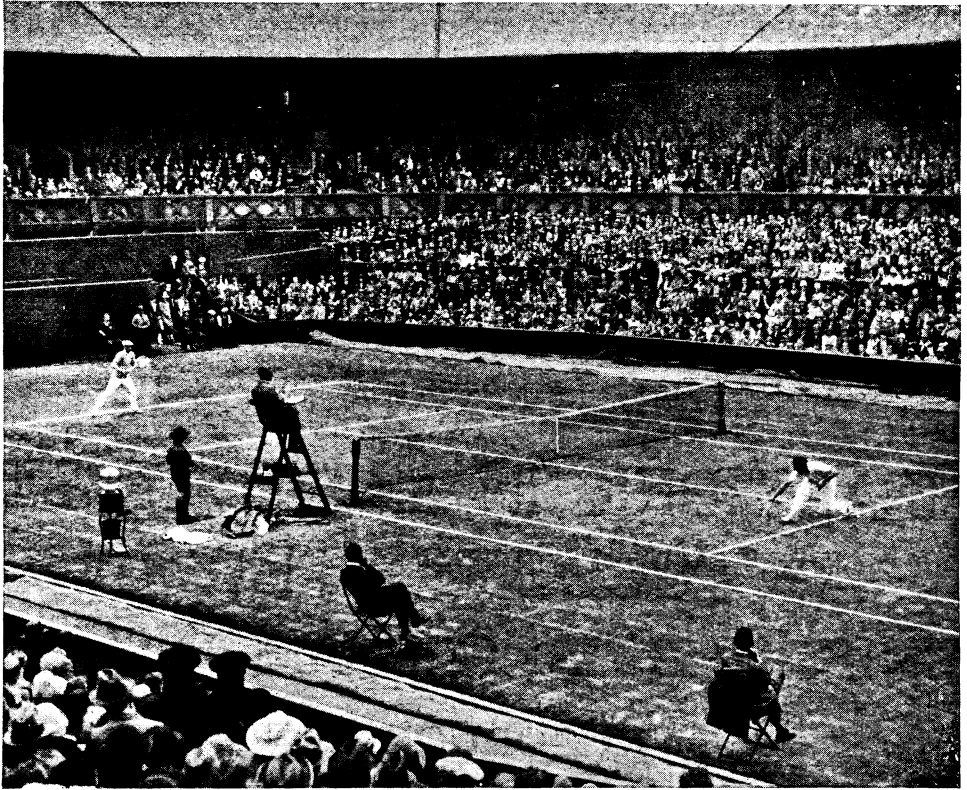


Photo by]

R. LACOSTE v. J. BOROTRA IN THE FINAL OF THE MEN'S SINGLES.

[Sport & General.

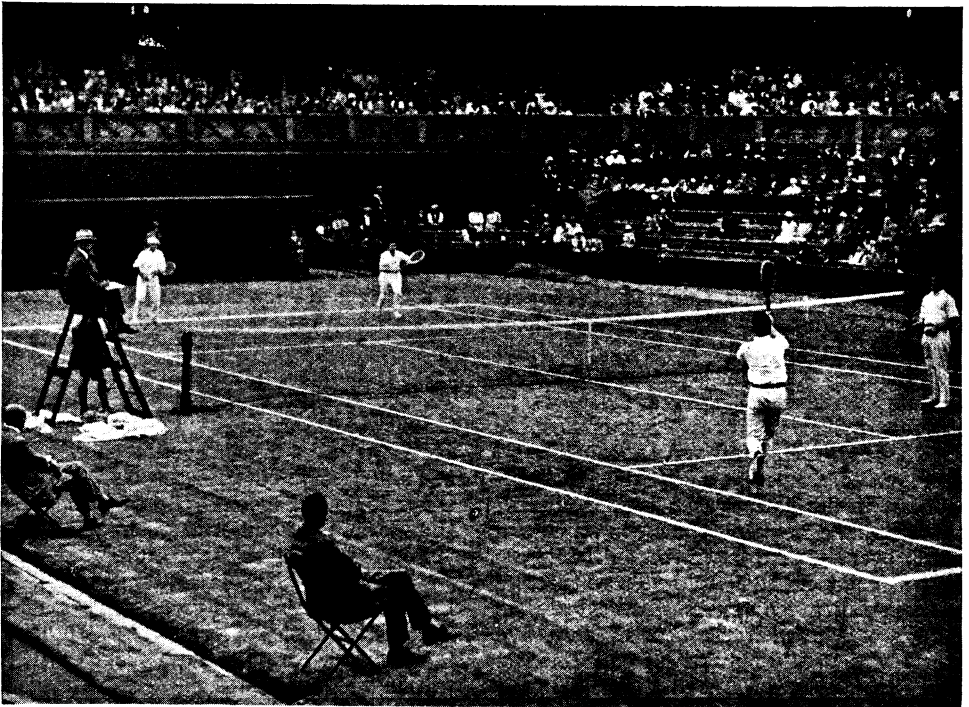
moment has revolutionized Lawn Tennis. For this reason alone the game has become more spectacular and brilliant. The leading players of to-day may miss more, but they certainly hit harder, than those of the past. The fundamental fact, however, remains that every move, stroke, and tactic of Lawn Tennis, even the carrying out of the simplest of kills, is directed from the brain. Perfect strokes and physical fitness alone have never been sufficient to win big matches, other great qualities, chief amongst them being strength of character, are

in quite the same way as Lacoste, Borotra, or Spence do. The former type of player uses a drive which is almost mechanical in its action; he will go on producing it against every type of opponent. The game of the latter type is one of variation with no fixed strokes; it is his job to develop strokes which are going to break up and eventually overcome that regular driving game when he meets it.

The great feature of this year's Wimbledon was the remarkable success of the French players, who carried all before them

in wonderful fashion. Ten years ago no one could have visualised the present sweeping success of the French players, so impossible would it have been for them to attain it with their earlier temperaments, but they now possess that force of character and set purpose which enable them to surmount their difficulties and to make the most of their beautiful strokes. The Frenchmen, I think, owed their high position at Wimbledon in no small measure to the splendid example set them by Suzanne Lenglen. They have risen to great heights through her inspiration and patriotism. Suzanne was always

world. There is no man who has taken his tennis more seriously than Lacoste. Hardly a day passes during the year that he does not practice unceasingly; generally his sparring partners have been either Darronval, the popular French professional, or Albert Burke, another brilliant instructor. He will practice a particular stroke for days on end until perfection is reached. It is said that Lacoste keeps a note-book in which he jots down any little points about players likely to give him future trouble. I was asked the other day why it was that the Frenchman used up so many rackets.



*Photo by]*

*[Central News.*

J. HENNESSEY AND R. CASEY *v.* J. BOROTRA AND R. LACOSTE IN THE FINAL OF THE MEN'S DOUBLES.

present to watch her countrymen play and to cheer them on if things were going wrong. In addition, her own superlative play was in itself a sufficient incentive to inspire them.

Lacoste, the new champion, who is only 20, owes his rapid advance to a profound study of Lawn Tennis coupled with his own perfectly produced strokes. As all will remember, the young Frenchman sprang into prominence by defeating that shrewd tactician, Roper Barrett, at Brussels in 1922. Three years later he had won the most coveted prize of the Lawn Tennis

The reason is that a point is not secured by one stroke alone, but by the accumulative effort of four or more. It is that little attention to detail, the playing with the perfect instrument, which makes all the difference in a close struggle. The classical methods of Lacoste are very similar to those of the famous Doherty, except that the new champion has brought his strokes into line with the new developments of the game.

There were, however, many instances at Wimbledon when players did not use their heads sufficiently. It is easy to

criticise from the stands, but often one sees how a faulty position on court has been the cause of a lost point. A timely lob on many occasions would have saved a man from disaster. A player often has missed his chance by the failure to change his pace or stroke at the crisis of the match, or by not killing a short lob when the opportunity occurred. Godfree and Wheatley were several times within a point of winning the first set against Lacoste and Borotra; on each of these occasions Godfree netted the ball in his attempt to return Lacoste's service with his backhand. One wondered why he did not endeavour to vary this procedure by trying a lob or standing more round to return the service forehanded.

It is a remarkable fact that Mdlle. Lenglen never plays any stroke with which the onlooker could disagree; her headwork is perfect, she always does the right thing for the occasion.

No player, whose power of concentration is not perfectly developed, has ever won at Wimbledon. Suzanne Lenglen and René Lacoste both possess this faculty to an astonishing degree. The chief handicap to many players, especially our own, is their inability to make their minds oblivious to outside influence while a match is in progress. A player must think of nothing but the matter in hand and concentrate on winning. Suzanne was taught to concentrate in her early youth by her father; now from the moment she steps on to the court, every stroke is played as if it were the last point of the match. To go through so searching a test as the Ladies' Singles at Wimbledon with the loss of only five games, was a truly remarkable performance. Miss Ryan, Miss McKane and Mrs. Beamish were all playing well against the champion, and yet in these three matches she lost only two games in all; these were scored by the first mentioned player. It would have been impossible for the Lady Champion, while registering those wonderful scores, to take her mind off the matter in hand for a single instant. It is a mistaken kindness to give games away to a weaker opponent and very detrimental to your own form. Perhaps our young girl players, with the exception of Miss Fry, would do well to concentrate more. The Indian representatives, especially Jacob and the Fyzees, have all learnt the value of concentration. A. H. Fyzee brought out this quality in his match with Timmer, who is the finer stroke player.

Crole Rees played Hennessey when the latter was not at his best. The Englishman must have won the match if he had pushed relentlessly on from start to finish. A man must never look at the crowd, least of all an individual in it, while he is playing. He must be impervious to wrong decisions, cross clapping, or the movement of spectators along the side of the court if he wants to succeed at Wimbledon.

The determination to succeed, the power of never giving in, is another match-winning factor. Determination is perhaps a characteristic of English Lawn Tennis; we will always stick to it until the end, and very often pertinacity is richly rewarded. Miss Joan Fry proved herself to be a very determined player, for to reach the final she had to fight her way through a half which included contemporaries such as Miss Saunders, Miss Reid Thomas, Mrs. Lycett. There were also the Australians, Mrs. Harper and Miss Akhurst, the latter of whom gave Miss Fry a very close match, and at one time looked like winning. Jacob went into court determined to beat Washer, and a splendid match was the result. The All-Indian captain lost the first two sets chiefly, it was said, through practising strokes and acclimatising himself to the surface of the centre court in order to win the next three! Certainly during the last three sets Jacob gave as fine an exposition of the backhand drive as was seen at Wimbledon this year. Anderson had to draw on all his powers of determination to secure victory in his match against Dr. Andraee on the fateful No. 1 Court; indeed, the Indian Davis Cup player actually led 3—1 in the fifth set!

Courage is an outstanding feature in the winning of big matches. The player who is afraid to go for his shot at the critical moment will never be successful. Courage will enable a man to come out on top in the crisis of a match, instead of just going under. Anderson showed great courage in his match with Brugnon, which proved to be the most thrilling of the Championships. The Frenchman was two sets up and led 4—1 in the next when Anderson pulled up and won the set at 6—4. The Australian extricated himself from an even worse position in the fourth set by a remarkable display of pluck. Brugnon was at the point of victory when Anderson saved the match by two terrific drives which found the extreme corners of the court well out of reach of the Frenchman's racket.



The Australian's courage had pulled him through, but it was the closest shave I have ever witnessed in any match!

It must have taken untold pluck for Miss Joan Fry, whose entry for Wimbledon was not accepted in 1924, to step out into the centre court before packed stands and face the unconquerable Suzanne. She how-

his service and even his other strokes. These tactics have the effect of keeping Borotra back and, as we all know, he is a very different man on the baseline from what he is at close quarters. Garland, captain of the American team, played two very plucky matches with Lord Cholmondeley and Eames; on both occasions the full five sets had to be played



*Photo by]*

Mlle. LENGLEN AND MISS RYAN IN THE LADIES' DOUBLES FINAL.

*[Central News.*

ever, acquitted herself well in this really great ordeal. Turnbull, the only Englishman to shine at Wimbledon, rose to the occasion manfully against Borotra, and really was unlucky not to win on the day. He attacked Borotra with great pluck from the start. Turnbull, who is a careful student of form knows that the best way to play this Frenchman is to stand right in, to take

before a decision was reached. Players should play their strokes with the sting of courage as opposed to the tentative strokes of fear. It is surprising the effect which the two types of play will have on an opponent; he knows instinctively what you are feeling.

A good many players if you asked them why they used a certain tactic on court



would often say they did not know. They play by instinct. It becomes second nature to use certain strokes on all occasions. One could not imagine Borotra from choice playing from any other position than the net. Anderson and Hennessey rely chiefly on the speed of their forehand drives to pull them through. Cochet hits out at the ball with a reckless abandon, no matter whom he is playing. Our own player, Gilbert, waits patiently until he is in the position to bring off his favourite acute-angled passing shot. Some men will go for the most difficult shot that is open to them, as Washer is inclined to do. Lacoste, studious player that he is, is a good example of a man who never attempts any fireworks or gallery shots unless they are absolutely necessary. That he can bring them off, we all know; he does one occasionally just to remind us of this fact. One of the gems of the meeting was a winner made by Lacoste off an almost untakable cross-court smash from Anderson. The Australian has a peculiar instinct when at the net to use the stop volley on all occasions; a deep forceful volley would often pay him much better. The average man will play too much by instinct when more thought on how to beat his opponent would pay him better; a combination of the two is good.

Experience is a valuable asset which will carry a man through when all else has failed. No player can be great until he has bought his experience in a hard school. For years many a great player has had to put up with failures, disappointments, and defeats until he has emerged after that period the finished player. Often a young novice has lacked the experience to pull off a good win after a commanding lead has been obtained. The experienced man seems to possess just the faculty for doing the right thing at the right moment and of turning seeming defeat into victory. It was experience that pulled the elegant Frenchwoman, Madame Billout, through in her thrilling match with Mrs. Lycett. Hennessey and Casey just lack the experience to make them into great players. Our own men, Wheatley, Kingsley, and Summerson, want a few more seasons of match play to bring them out. Sharpe, Gregory, and Lester all have first class strokes; none, however, of these young players shone at Wimbledon, because they are still in the apprenticeship stage—their experience has not yet been gained. A man must learn by bitter experience the

best game to develop for all occasions and opponents!

H. L. Doherty believed that the power to anticipate the other man's stroke was the most important thing in the game. Certainly, "the Little Doe" had this great asset developed to an uncanny degree. Borotra's anticipation at the net is a feature of his play. He always seems to be in the right place to take the ball. Suzanne never has to run much—her anticipation is so wonderful. Lycett is another player who seldom fails to guess the direction of the ball. A beginner will often not start for the ball until it is across the net; in reality, he should begin reading its direction as his opponent is shaping to return it.

Perfect self-control should always be maintained during a match. An excitable temperament must be kept well in hand and no outside influence allowed to ruffle it. The man who loses his temper on the court is doomed to failure.

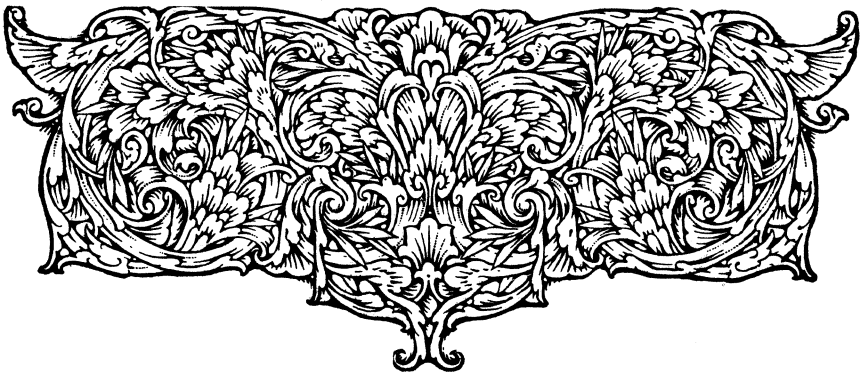
Lacoste's method is always to take the rough with the smooth. It was great to see Borotra force a smile in the final of the singles when he was being foot-faulted. Whatever the Basque was feeling himself, he did not let the crowd know. The temperament that needs the atmosphere of combat, of the arena, and of great events to draw out a man's best is the right one. Tilden, from whom we are promised a visit next year, is a player particularly after this style; the greater the occasion the better he will play. There are other unfortunate players—I include myself amongst this latter category—who play about 15 per cent. better in practice than match play, and fail to do themselves justice at Wimbledon. This is merely temperament, but a very difficult handicap to overcome. Washer seems to me to be rather this type of player, and perhaps Anderson in a lesser degree; the Australian was certainly not doing himself justice at Wimbledon for some reason or other. The man who can answer all sorts of trivial little questions from people who come up to him in the changing room at Wimbledon while he is getting ready to play a big match, and answer pleasantly, must be fairly strong minded. Miss Ryan is naturally an anxious player, yet it is wonderful how little she shows this on court; few who watch her play would realise it. Wilding used to say that physical fitness was the best antidote

to nerves, the bugbear of some lawn tennis players. In addition to this, physical fitness is absolutely essential in the winning of a long match. In a critical fifth set a man's condition must play a big part in ultimate success. The artistic temperament, as opposed to a very stolid one, is probably the best for rising to heights at lawn tennis. Suzanne certainly possesses the artistic temperament. It is her magnetic personality, as well as her play, which has proved such an extraordinary drawing power with the public wherever she goes. Perhaps Lacoste has more of the stolid temperament, and his game for this reason lacks the brilliancy of Tilden, Vincent Richards, or Borotra. Against this, however, he seldom finds himself in the unpleasant positions during his matches which those three players sometimes do.

There is something very similar in the atmosphere of a lawn tennis match to that of a prize fight; indeed, a lawn tennis player requires very much the same pugnacious temperament as a boxer does. From the moment two adversaries step on to court, there is no respite or quarter given by either until the match is over. The failure to punch hard or to deliver the knock-out blow when the opportunity occurs may mean the loss of the match.

In the single game there is great scope

for head-work and variety. To prove this theory, one has only to examine the methods of the various champions who have won at Wimbledon; men with such vastly different styles have succeeded equally well. Could one ever wish to see a greater contrast in strokes than that between those of Borotra, the winner of 1923, and those of Lacoste, this year's winner? A good doubles player must adopt the recognised strokes and positions on court if he is to succeed. There is only one form of tactics he can employ. But the close-quarter volleying, the quick interchange of strokes, and the smashing in a good double must have more interest for the multitude, if not for the epicure. For this reason many people said that they enjoyed Anderson's and Lycett's match with Morpurgo and Kehrling as much as any during the Championships. The latter couple snatched the match out of the fire just as the champions of 1922 seemed to be on the threshold of a three-set victory. One of the tit-bits of the meeting, missed by many owing to the lateness of the hour at which it was played, was the heroic struggle waged by Mr. and Mrs. Lycett against Suzanne and Borotra. Lycett has a great heart; he is one of the few Englishmen who can stand up to fast tennis and give as good as he gets!



# THE PIPER

By MADGE S. SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY LILIAN HOCKNELL

BABS ran along. She ran along because Mother had said: "Run along to the others on the beach." That was when Babs pulled at her fingers when she thought she had talked to the long man long enough.

They had all started out for the beach together, Mother and Babs and the other children who stayed at their house, and their nurse. Not the long man. He came later, on the way, and it was because of talking to him that Mother stopped, and told Babs to run along.

You could see the blue, blue sea at the end of the great wide street, and Babs knew the beach was between the houses and the blue, though you could see no beach till you came to the steps. Babs wanted to be on the beach. But Mother stopped and talked to the long man with big spectacugs. He stooped a lot, and shook hands with Mother a lot, and he was looking at her all the time with tiny round eyes in the middle of the spectacugs. Babs would not have tugged at Mother's fingers if she had remembered it was rude. Mother kept on talking and the gentleman kept on talking. He must be a gentleman, Babs decided, because Mother kept on talking. When it was only a man, she only ordered fish and things like that.

The beach began to seem a long way off. The road, which was made of sand and pebbles, as roads at the seaside mostly are, was very wide and long, and very hot. It was also very empty. Its emptiness frightened Babs. The other children and their nurse were out of sight, because they had gone down the steps. They would be taking off their shoes down there.

Babs ran along as she had been told. She wanted—more than wanted, longed passionately—to be on the beach, but she wanted Mother to be there, too. And Mother had said to the tall gentleman: "Suppose we find a cool place in the Gardens." The Gardens were near the big

hotel, and not interesting, though they sold ices there.

Babs ran along, obedient but reluctant. The others had got a tremendous start. She rather wanted to howl as she ran, but thought better of it. She ran hard and manfully, her dimpled brown knees, one with a red scar on it, coming well up at each step under the few inches of blue serge beneath her blue jersey. Her small pepper-and-salt sand-shoes were smothered in dust. She was quite alone. She would have liked to turn back and rush howling after Mother. But no! You might cover up an inability to explain matters to the world at large by howling loud and long, but not to Mother. And when Mother had said "Run along," you just ran along. Besides, she had vanished.

Now Babs was going down to the beach. If the road had been terrifyingly empty, the beach was more terrifyingly full. There were thousands and thousands of people. Babs couldn't see the other children and the nurse. There were thousands of children, but not those children.

First she had to go down the steps to the beach. This was a thing she had never done alone before, though she had always wished to. The steps had a black, shiny rail at the side; beneath was soft furrowed sand, where the donkeys rested. The only way for persons of independence and spirit to go down those steps was astride the rail. Babs had never been allowed to do this. It required practice and an accomplice to do it the first time, but she did the next best thing.

She grasped it firmly in her hands, leaned forward heavily, kicked off with her toes and slid down on her stomach. This was a great success. You simply could not go down astride it all alone. Besides, to make the descent with your red-hot face upside down, gazing at the awful depths of sand beneath, in which a child, falling face down, would be instantly swallowed up and never seen again, was an almost braver thing to have

done. At the bottom she fell off nicely, and sat safely down in soft, warm sand. It had been a soul-satisfying experience, but thrown away for want of an eye-witness. When she told them, "I slid right down on my tummy," they could say, "You didn't!" and she could only affirm, "I did," and, as everybody knows, that sort of thing can go on for ever.

Well, Babs got up out of the sand and looked for the others. She couldn't see them. The corners of her mouth went down; she was getting ready her famous howl, which had never yet failed to attract attention to her troubles, when something else howled first.

It was a long, thin, unearthly screech that seemed to put Babs's very best howl right out of business. The corners of her mouth still drooped, her spirits still grovelled in hot and lonely misery, but the howling was being done for her. It was a howl of utter desolation, of such depth as Babs's five-year-old experience had never yet fathomed, and then lo, all in a breath, it was off on a swinging triumphant march that caught up her spirits, caught up the corners of her mouth, caught up her feet in their dusty sand-shoes, caught up her dimpled knees with their scars and bruises, started her whole little person off, willy-nilly, spirits, mouth, feet, knees, fists, chin, chest and all, marching face-forward, whither she knew not, but only knew that nothing was going to stop her.

Oh, hurray! Babs could not have howled now, even if she had wanted, because of the lump in her throat, but there were tears in her eyes and tears rolling down her short nose. Her round, freckled face was red. It was hot with triumph, determination, courage, effort. Everybody on the beach was marching now, but Babs was marching quicker and more irresistibly than anybody else.

Now she stopped dead. She stood rooted to the sand, her eyes very big, very round, gazing, gazing. And towards her was coming the most wonderful being Babs had ever seen.

A real, live Highland piper! Oh, the glory and majesty of that piper, the mighty swing of those alluring kilts, and the sporran that swung with them, and the plaid that swung, too, over that stalwart shoulder, and the jaunty bonnet with its eagle-feather, and the lilt of the soul-stirring music his scarcely-moving lips breathed into the bagpipes under his arm! And oh, the brave

brown legs as bare as Babs's own, but a great deal thicker, of course, and the shining silver brooch on his shoulder, and the glitter of his buttons and his buckles!

If he had come on another two yards, he must have marched straight through Babs or over her. She would have gone on standing there, gazing, thumb in mouth, while the piper mowed her down. But just in time he switched round, turned about with, oh such a lordly swing of that splendid kilt, and now he was marching away, away, as if he would never stop, still filling a world of wonder and adventure and splendour with that compelling voice.

In a short space the piper turned again, and so, to and fro, to and fro, rhythmic, barbarous, disciplined, wild as the wind, the Highlander trod out with light, quick, short-stepping feet the air his untiring pipes skirled out. Babs sucked her thumb hard, gazing and listening, rapt in wonder and delight. It was the most wonderful thing in all her life. It was all the wonderful things she had ever thought of or dreamed, rolled up in one amazing realisation.

Just a poor Highland piper, super-annuated relic of a regiment of glorious tradition, eking out a scanty pension with what beach-loungers cared to drop in his shabby cap. Probably risking the meagre pension, too, by doing it, were the truth known. Yes, this tremendous being carried round his proud cap meekly from hand to hand. Babs had the palpitating honour of putting in it her penny. That ordinary brown thing, intended for a mere brief donkey ride, was admitted without question into that distinguished receptacle, more dignified than any bag offered by grave and reverend churchwarden.

And once more he rent the air with that preliminary wail, again resumed that rhythmic march to and fro. Babs stood, thumb in mouth, lost in the delightful feeling that her penny had made him in some measure her piper.

Then devastating grief overcame her. Mother was missing it. She was enjoying this wonderful thing, and poor Mother, all unconscious of what she was missing, was talking to the gentleman in spectacles.

Babs tore herself away. She must fetch Mother. Back along the beach, up the steps, endless, gritty, tiresome steps, down which she had slid so easily.

"Frightened of the bagpipes, missy?" asked huge John Jones, the boatman, barring her way with his great laugh. Babs

pummelled his expansive front and ran on. The road was terribly wide, long, empty, and full of hot sunshine. There was a squidge of wet pitch on her shoe, but there was no time to make a pudding of it. Babs was within howling distance of the Gardens now. She howled as she ran: "Mother, Mother!"

Babs was rather an expert at howling. Wide-mouthed, she gave full play to her lungs, beating hard upon the ground with her feet in a wild war-dance that seemed to give added strength to her vocal chords. When Babs howled and danced in a public place, it invariably resulted in her getting what she wanted.

But to-day she was up against forces outside the family. There was nobody there to give her her own way. She could not find Mother. She could see her nowhere. It would have been surprising if she had, for people whose eyes are full of hot tears do not see far in front of their noses. She ran round, looking in all the little places where people sit and read and sew and talk; she hurried from one to another, howling more sadly at each fresh disappointment.

Oh, she must find Mother! She must find her! It would be too late, and Mother would never see that splendid sight.

"Oh, Mother, Mother, Mother!"

"I believe it is your offspring," said the tall gentleman in spectacles, standing up to look out of the window of the little pavilion where they made excellent ices.

And the young widow who was so fresh and dainty in her black and white that she scarcely suggested the widow to you, especially when you had known her as a young girl, jumped up, leaving an untasted sundae on the marble-topped table, and ran out into the heat. She had to run ever so far before she caught a small, stumbling, wailing figure and clasped its sturdy substance to her.

"Hurt?"

No, Babs was not hurt. But—oh, come along—the piper! The piper! He'd be gone. Babs had been looking everywhere, everywhere.

"Come quick, Mother! Run! Come and see!"

"Oh, but it's much too hot to hurry, darling! Suppose you just tell me about it."

But Babs, again howling, danced before her in furious impatience.

Mother yielded. Babs's tears were lost in wreathed smiles. But Mother must

hurry. No, no! She could not have her face washed before she went back on the beach. He'd be gone. Oh, run!

"I shall have to go down. Babs has these brainstorm at times. All right, Babs."

Would Babsever, ever get her there intime? When they came to the steps, the magic music was stilled. Slowly and heavily Babs went down on her own feet, step by step. Nothing mattered. It was too late. The people were all walking about. The piper was gone.

Mother said: "Poor Babs! So it's all over. Never mind."

Babs didn't want sympathy. She went right away and stood on the end of the sand, with nothing between her and the understanding sea, that never said things when you were hurt and wanted to be alone.

It was lost, the incomparable moment, the splendid sight, the thing that would not come again. And Mother had lost it, too, and cared not, for she did not know what she had lost. It was the fault of the long gentleman. Babs hated him. It was too desperately bitter to howl about.

And then out burst again the long, unutterable woe of that preliminary wail. Oh, courage! Oh, hope! Oh, effort! Oh, strength and sacrifice and all things splendid! Here he came, swinging along the smooth sands, swaying kilts, swaying sporran, swaying plaid—oh, splendid moment!

Mother's face was very white. Her lips were shut close. But she was not cross.

"Isn't he lovely, Mother?" breathed Babs, clutching her fingers hotly.

"Lovely, dear? Why, he's a piper of Daddy's regiment! See, here's something for him. He is bringing his bonnet round. Do you want to put it in?"

Oh, unforgettable moment, recovered after such anguish of disappointment!

Unspeakable adoration glowed in Babs's tear-drowned brown eyes as the huge silver cart-wheel rolled among humble pence.

"Donald's regiment," murmured the widow.

She had not seen nor heard the pipers beside whom her dead Donald had led a hundred or more gallant lads to death and glory, but she knew all about it. That was just before Babs was born, Babs who was all she had left of Donald. There was a catch in her voice, though she tried to speak casually and lightly to the tall man, who stood beside her almost as if he had a right to be there.

"No, I'd rather not drive with you,



"She was getting ready her famous howl—when something else howled first."

thanks. I didn't come here to meet people," she said almost bluntly.

"But—you've just promised. Surely, meeting again after all these years—have you forgotten, Maisie?" he said, low and pleading.

"Yes"—her words came fiercely—"I've forgotten everything that came—before Donald. I don't want to remember anything. Come, Babs!"

She caught Babs's hand and drew her close, a radiant, exulting, speechless Babs.

"But surely—you don't mean—you've just promised to dine with me to-night, and to let me take you to the dance."

"I'm not coming."

She left him standing in doubt and confusion. He was shut out. Her starry eyes looked straight ahead, and Babs's starry eyes looked straight ahead, too.



ANOTHER SERVANT PROBLEM.

"This knife is not clean, Claribel."

"Then it *ought* to be Mum; the last thing I cut with it was soap."

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### A PLEASANT SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

*By Archibald W. Couch.*

IT was probably my own fault, in the first instance, for not remembering Cousin George's strong democratic sympathies. With improvident heedlessness, over a Martini at the Club, I had been inveighing against the Great British Public's pernicious habit of exercising its limbs by proxy on the occasion of its weekly half-holiday. Our school and college debating societies, I recalled proudly (recollecting my own not altogether insignificant contributions to the discussions) had decided, beyond doubt or question, that professionalism was bad for sport and detrimental to the highest interest of the nation.

"Ever seen a professional match?" asked George, ominously calm and deliberate.

"Er—well—that is—no, not exactly," I spluttered, somewhat taken aback.

"Then you shall come with me to-morrow," he decreed firmly.

I never argue with George. I have too much respect for his oft-reiterated dislike of the futilities of academic disputation. More-

over, his physical frame is planned on a more generous scale than my own, and his temper is not at all times completely under control.

"Right-ho, George." I answered as brightly as I could, gulping down a slight feeling of irritation.

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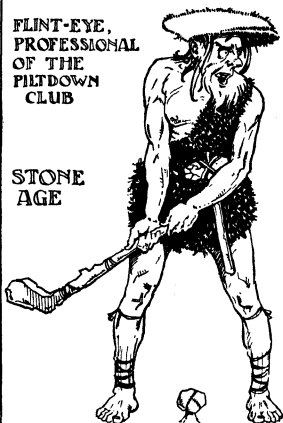
We decided (or George did) that I should have to forego what he calls my "midday gorge" and content myself with a "perpendicular" (again I quote my cousin) at a public hostelry.

I confess that I found it somewhat difficult to make much of a meal whilst holding a pint tankard firmly in the right hand, one sandwich between the forefinger and thumb of the left, and two more (in reserve) between such others as remained available. The slipperiness of the floor, too (occasioned by a most effective blend of beer and sawdust), rendered one's foothold somewhat precarious, while my fellow-lunchers moved about with a fine contempt for the dangers of collision.

These, however, were but minor drawbacks, and one must be prepared to make some little sacrifices in the pursuit of pleasure.

FLINT-EYE,  
PROFESSIONAL  
OF THE  
PILTDOWN  
CLUB

STONE  
AGE



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN  
SHOWING  
LANGUAGE  
OF THE  
PERIOD



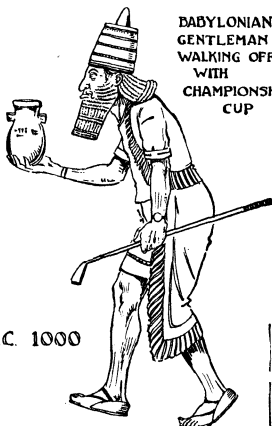
CHINESE,  
PING DYNASTY

LI AH,  
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TO HAVE  
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IN ONE  
WITH A  
BAMBOO  
NIBLICK



BABYLONIAN  
GENTLEMAN  
WALKING OFF  
WITH  
CHAMPIONSHIP  
CUP

B.C. 1000



GREEK



ΕΝΘΑΔΕΛΓ  
CHAMPION OF  
PΕΡ:VΛΛX

OBSERVE  
THE CLASSIC  
STYLE

PERSIAN



ALI BEN HASSAN of BAGHDAD  
GOING ROUND THE COURSE  
WITH A FRIEND

MIDDLE AGES

THOMAS  
TITMUS  
OF YE  
TOOTINGE  
GOLFE CLUBBE



KING GEORGE  
THE THIRD'S  
COURT GOLFER  
PLAYING AT  
BUNHILL ROW



OUR LOCAL  
HEROES



GOLF IN HISTORY.

SOME FAMOUS CHAMPIONS, PAST AND PRESENT.



The first instalment of our journey was done by tramcar. George would probably have got his Blue for strap-hanging, but it is an acrobatic feat at which I confess to being singularly inexpert. The large and grim-visaged female

However, even tramcar journeys eventually come to an end, and within ten minutes of my catastrophe we had descended into London's Avernus. The main difference, I suppose, between a "football hour" passenger on the



#### THE WRONG COMMENT

HE: She once made a fool of me.

SHE: What lasting impressions some people do make!

into whose capacious lap I was on one occasion precipitated was (I thought) needlessly offensive, while the financial compensation she demanded for the basket of eggs which I destroyed was, on the indisputable evidence of my olfactory organ, a gross imposition.

Tube and a tinned sardine is that the sardine is not packed (one hopes) until after death. But at least I was spared the ignominy of another fall, though I must say that I rather regretted the loss of the gold cigarette-case which Pauline had given me on my last birthday.



THE SIMPLER WAY.

PARENT (after wordy argument over boy's ticket): Fancy making such a fuss! Why, if 'e 'adn't a clean suit on, 'e'd 'a' bin under the seat!



### AN UNNECESSARY QUESTION.

ARTIST: Congratulate me, old man, I've just sold a twenty-guinea drawing!  
SECOND ARTIST: How much for?

I had a foreboding that she might be vexed about it—a foreboding amply justified by subsequent events.

"About a quarter of an hour's walk from here," said George cheerily, as we reached the open again. And within thirty-five minutes we had arrived.

I heartily agreed with my cousin that it would be a sheer waste of hard-earned money to patronise any of the numerous stands which lent the ground such an agreeably rustic ap-

"titanic struggle," as the sporting papers described it on the following Monday.

First, it appeared to me that George's trifling physical superiority gave him a grossly unfair advantage over me. I believe he actually saw the ball itself two or three times.

Secondly, the human elbow. Never before had I realised what a prominent part in life is played by the elbow. The sportsmen to my immediate right and left were equipped with elbows developed to a degree of knob-

ness which I should have judged impossible—a development due, perchance, to an over-enthusiastic devotion to the fine old British pastime of "lifting the elbow."

Then the question of hats. I really think George might have forewarned me of the unpopularity of the bowler at these functions, instead of leaving me to buy the knowledge myself at the price of a brand-new hat. As soon as Battersea had scored a goal, the gentleman behind me deftly lifted my bowler and flung it a considerable distance into the air. My half-formulated protest froze upon my lips as I perceived that the rest of my neighbours were anti-bowlerites to a man.

Altogether it proved a highly instructive, if not excessively entertaining, afternoon.

"Magnificent game, wasn't it?" shouted George enthusiastically, as he once more disported himself on the strap that really belonged to me.

"Great," I muttered meekly, clinging desperately to the strap-rail with my finger-tips.

"By the way, old man," I continued mildly, a few moments later, "would you mind telling me what colours the teams wore? Pauline will like to know that, I expect."

George glared at me, more in anger than in sorrow.

"My dear fellow," he protested fiercely, "when I take the trouble to bring you out here to see the finest spectacle in the world, surely you might have the decency to pay a *little* attention to the game!"

I didn't attempt to answer. George is considerably stronger than I am, and his temper is not at all times under complete control.



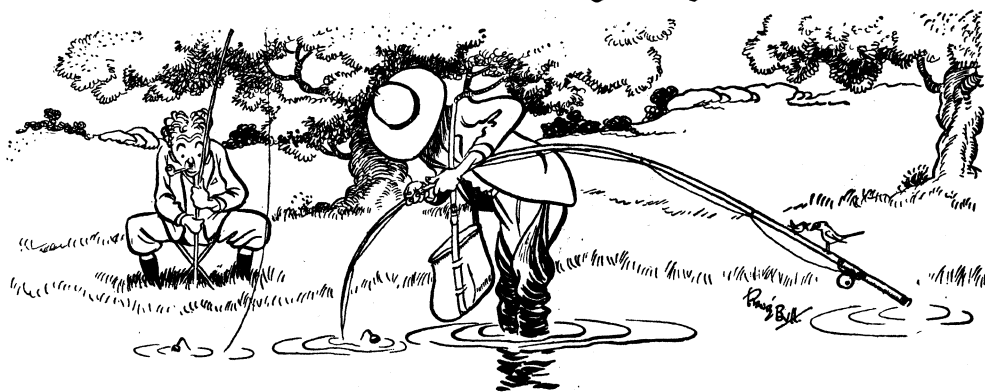
THE GIFT OF REPARTEE.

NAVY (to traveller who has complained at having his feet heavily trodden on): Well I can't 'elp it, can I, what 'jer expect in a bus—the Russian Ballet?

pearance, reminiscent of cattle byres. "What's good enough for the working-man is good enough for us," bellowed George democratically, looking down upon me benevolently from his six foot five.

"Quite, quite," I hastened to assure him, smiling wanly up at him from my five foot six.

I retain some vivid impressions of this



THE RIVALS.

## THE NEW ADAM.

Aspirin is now being used to foster the growth of plants.  
 I cannot delay when my dinner is ended,  
 To linger at table can never be mine,  
 And often my guests are distinctly offended  
 When left to themselves for the walnuts and wine;  
 But they hasten at once to accord me their pardon  
 As soon as my Phyllis the reason reveals—  
 That the yellow carnation that graces the garden  
 Is given its tonic each day after meals.

In cricket no longer I find any pleasure,  
 Though once I was simply devoted to sport;  
 For tennis and bowls I am lacking in leisure;  
 For croquet my playtime is clearly too short,  
 For, long ere the briefest of "innings" closes,  
 I have to be off to my gardening toil,  
 To deal out a draught of quinine to the roses,  
 And see that the pink takes its cod liver oil.

## FLORAL HATE.

INTERESTING experiments at the Jardin d'Acclimatisation in Paris have demonstrated that flowers can dislike a person.

This is very remarkable, but we are not really surprised to hear it. When Aunt Jane comes to see us she loves to "potter about" the garden with a trowel, a process often attended by devastating results. We once caught a snapdragon putting its tongue out at her. On another occasion a geranium in the front garden tried to bite the rate collector.

If you forget forget-me-nots they never forgive you, and a delphinium will take an intense dislike to anyone who calls it a lupin. If you want flowers to love you, try never to hurt their feelings.



## CURIOSITY.

MOTHER has told Jimmie that if he doesn't leave off beating his drum he won't have his birthday presents on the morrow.

PEGGY (one minute later): Mummie, Jimmie hasn't left off; what will he won't have?

Yet I grudge not the toll, for I know that unique'll  
 Be surely ere long my herbaceous display,  
 If the hollyhock sticks to its brimstone and treacle,  
 Nor the peony turns from its senna away;  
 And I shall be proud, by the neighbours regarded  
 As one who, to bring all this splendour to pass,  
 Adopted the latest designs and discarded  
 The watering-can for the medicine glass.

T. Hodgkinson.



PROFESSOR Low says that in the year 2925 all crime will be treated as a disease. Meanwhile the man who wears a white tie with a dinner jacket runs no risk of being sent to a hospital.

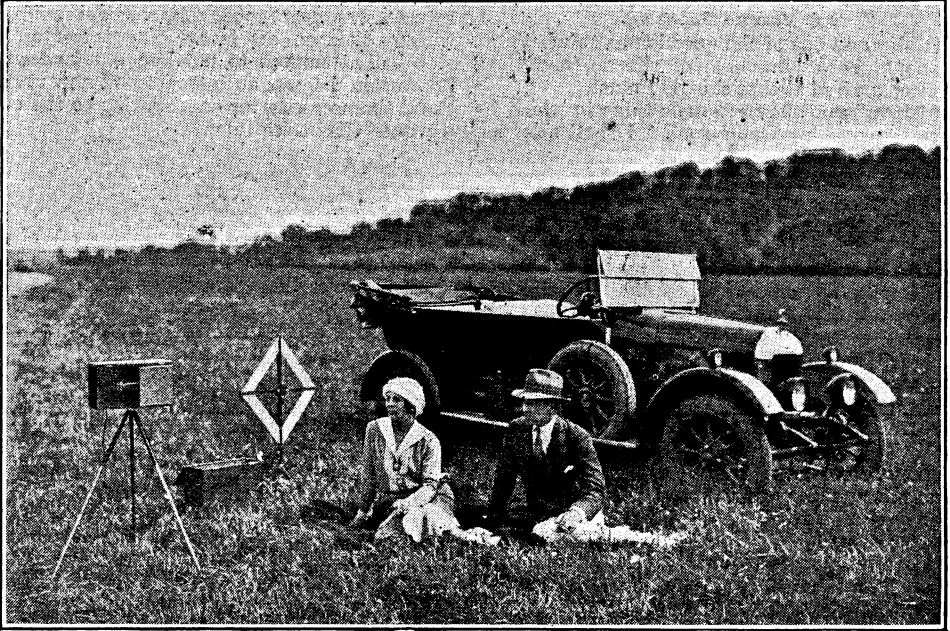
A MAN complained bitterly of the conduct of his son. He related at length to an old friend all the young man's escapades.

"You should speak to him with firmness and recall him to his duty," said the friend.

"But he pays not the least attention to what say. He listens only to the advice of fools. I wish you would talk to him."



WE are told that one person in every fourteen in Canada has a motor-car. This still leaves a good margin of pedestrians to practise on.



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## BEARDING A HUSBAND.

By Yvonne Sevesand.

It all arose out of the question as to whether it should be a bun, bob, or shingle, and the decision arrived at that shingle I must.

"Then," said the stern male thing to which I have tethered my Gallic soul, "I shall grow a beard."

Perhaps, looking back on the affair, it was not the shingle which was responsible for our hirsute interlude, but the unwifely laugh which greeted the threat of retaliation.

Then the stern male thing deserted his wife and family. Went away, as did the knights and saints of old when they had some dread purpose in hand, lest some of life's trivialities should turn them from their end. Yesterday morning the long period of probation was over. Our lord came back to us with triumph in his eye and hair about his face.

It was not nice hair. Not a beard like the glossy, crinkly ones which you see lifted by the Parisian breezes, and for which you long to make an embroidered cover. It was sandy, dull, and had a strange, unwashed look.

"Quite like our men," I said bravely, as a wife should.

I am afraid that was faint praise, for when I speak of my countrymen to my English husband, he jerks out "Good soldiers," as if that relieved them of sterner criticism.

Gabrielle was a little harsh. She regarded the immature door mat in which she was invited to nestle.

"I'll kiss you in the morning when you've shaved," she said tossing her curls. Informed that there was to be no shaving next morning or any other morning, she assumed the attitude of an adoring daughter who had been suddenly bereft of her male parent.

Baby was charitable at first. Evidently thinking that this was one of the jokes devised by an indulgent, if rather futile, father for her amusement. On closer acquaintance she showed herself a sceptic of your Darwin's creed, at any rate as applied to her own family tree.

It is life's little accidents which enable us to live. At ten o'clock out went a husband like

a Far West Cattleman. At six o'clock he returns, his dear good self, without one disturbing hair on his face. The porter at his club had attempted to put him out, under the impression he was an intruder! I now understand the necessity for contributing to the club servants' Christmas fund.



NEAR-SIGHTED OLD GENTLEMAN: Waiter! You told me you had no asparagus, but surely that lady over there is eating some.

WAITER: No, sir, beg pardon, sir, but she's only a-touching up her mouth with a lip stick.



QUITE UNSUITABLE.

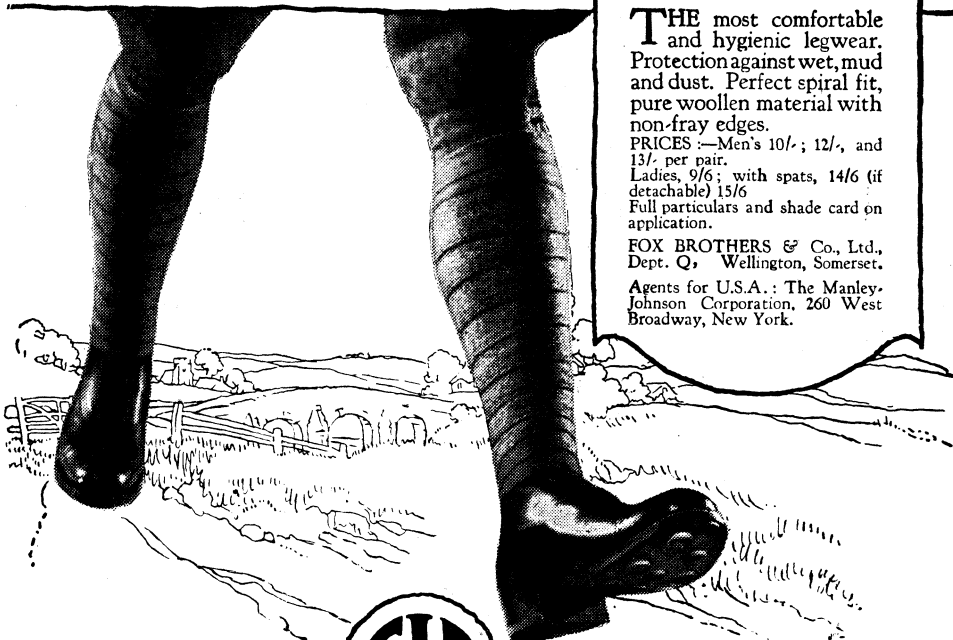
THE YOUNG BLOOD: You mean to say, they're the *only* boots you ever wear? By Jove, man, you must find them beastly awkward when you go to a dance!

THE following rather unfortunate remark is taken from a Parish Magazine: "A friend of the Vicar in India has just died, reminding him of an example which might well be followed."



SOME headlines display great lack of tact. This is what we noticed recently over a report of a Gas Company's Meeting:

Presidential Address  
Tremendous Output of Gas.



**T**HE most comfortable and hygienic legwear. Protection against wet, mud and dust. Perfect spiral fit, pure woollen material with non-fray edges.

PRICES:—Men's 10/-; 12/-, and 13/- per pair.

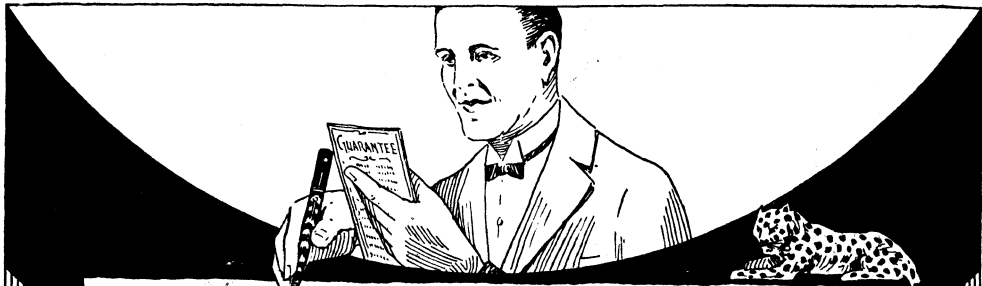
Ladies, 9/6; with spats, 14/6 (if detachable) 15/6

Full particulars and shade card on application.

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Spot Pens are entirely British made and are fitted with 14 carat gold nibs, iridium tipped, and to suit all

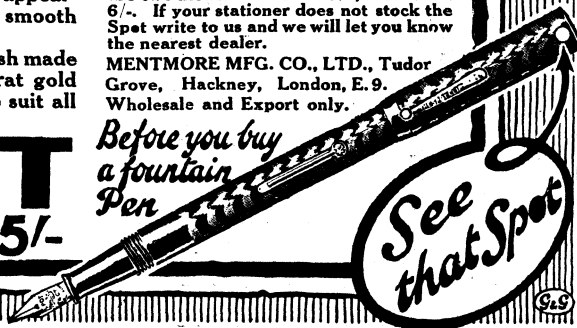
hands. Its large-ink capacity, the ease with which it is filled, and its utter reliability makes the Spot the best pen value on the market. There are two models—Black at 5/-; Mottled at 6/-. If your stationer does not stock the Spot write to us and we will let you know the nearest dealer.

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# SPOT

FOUNTAIN PEN 5/-

*Before you buy  
a fountain  
Pen*



*See  
that Spot*

S&S



A "DOMESTIC" TRAGEDY.

An unbreakable glass is said to have been invented.  
 Pause a moment, gentle stranger, but a moment  
 ere you pass;  
 I've a story that will rend your tender heart;  
 When you hear the tragic narrative of Gladys and  
 the glass,  
 Your teardrops will inevitably start.  
 It appeared a common tumbler of an ordinary size,  
 And in no unwonted fashion was it planned,  
 But it filled the startled maiden with unparalleled  
 surprise  
 When it didn't come to pieces in her hand.  
 When she first began to wash it, after Master and  
 a friend  
 Had utilised its service for a drink,  
 She was dreaming of a missive which her Percival  
 had penned,  
 And she debonairly banged it on the sink.

And they found her in the morning, when the day  
 was dawning grey,  
 Pale, exhausted, barely conscious on the ground,  
 With the weapons she had blunted in the conduct  
 of the fray  
 Lying scattered in profusion all around;  
 And, even as a warrior who's met his final fall,  
 Ere she started for a brighter, better land,  
 She pointed at the glassware and informed them  
 one and all  
 That it hadn't come to pieces in her hand.

Theta.



MODERN FRIGHTFULNESS.

THE modern girl is all right, bless her, but  
 when she gets hold of an adjective she does  
 whack it about.  
 I heard one of them recently, engaged in a



THE MAN'S WAY.

WIFE (returning after a holiday visit): My word, what an untidy mess you've made of the place!  
 HUSBAND: Great Scot! I like that—I've just cleaned up!

The way in which it managed to resist her careless  
 act

Was a thing she simply couldn't understand,  
 And she set out to discover if it really was a fact  
 That it wouldn't come to pieces in her hand.

She hit it with a hatchet (and it never even bent)  
 By way of a preliminary test,  
 And it roused her fighting spirit to a murderous  
 extent

When she found that she might have to give it  
 best.

She threw it at the mangle and she dropped it on  
 the floor,

She banged it like the cymbals in a band,  
 But the tumbler came up smiling just exactly as  
 before,

Though it should have come to pieces in her  
 hand.

thrilling conversation with a gentleman in the  
 next deck-chair. Was she staying at a nice  
 boarding-house? "Frightfully decent."

Did she play tennis? "Not too frightfully  
 well."

Was she fond of dancing? "Most fright-  
 fully."

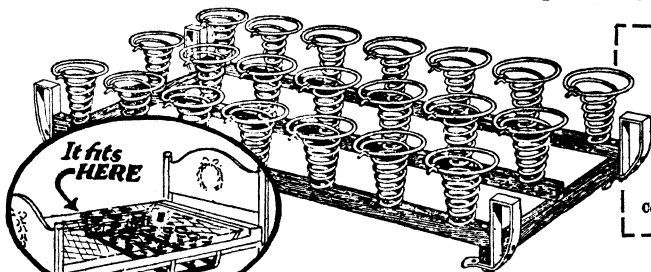
Did she think the band was good? "Oh,  
 frightfully."

Weren't they having ripping weather?  
 "Frightfully."

Did she bathe every day? "Rather! Makes  
 you feel frightfully fit if you don't stay in too  
 frightfully long."

We were all much relieved when the young  
 man asked her if she would care to have a stroll  
 round and she said, "Awfully frightfully."

# Box-Spring Comfort from your old Wire mattress—in a few minutes!



2-ft. 6-in. size ...	13/6
3-ft. size ...	15/6
3-ft. 6-in. size ...	17/6
4-ft. size ...	19/6
4-ft. 6-in. size ...	21/6

Complete from

**13/6**

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## TRY IT FOR 7 DAYS

**FREE** Send no money

at all. Simply send a postcard to the makers stating width of your mattress and the "Ner-sag" will be sent carriage paid immediately. Sleep on it for seven days. You will then gladly send the money and, like others, order a "Ner-sag" for every mattress in your home.

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Harrods, Barkers, Gamages, Owens, Army and Navy Stores, Bobbys, Bentalles, Lewis's, of Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, and most leading stores in London and the provinces.

Thousands already sold on these terms. Pay after 7 days' trial—what could be a fairer offer? Send width of mattress to-day—NOW!

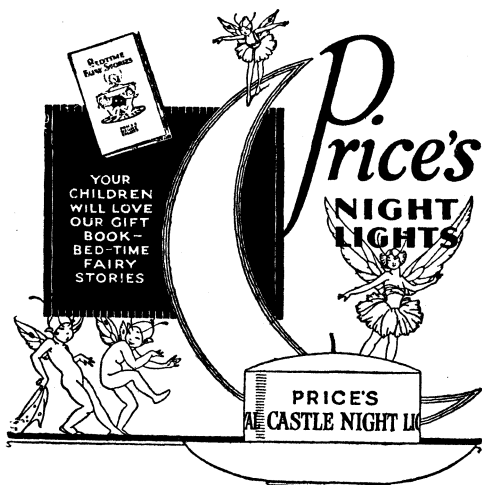
## "NER-SAG"—The Nest of Comfort

You can enjoy ALL the luxury and comfort of the most expensive Box Mattress. Put this patented "Ner-sag" (never-sag) MATTRESS SUPPORT under your wire spring mattress—no matter what kind it may be, or how much it sags at present—and it will be even better than a Box mattress. You will sleep much more comfortably and wake really refreshed every morning. Suitable for EVERY mattress. Very easy to attach. Guaranteed a lifetime.

User's opinion: "Best investment I ever made."

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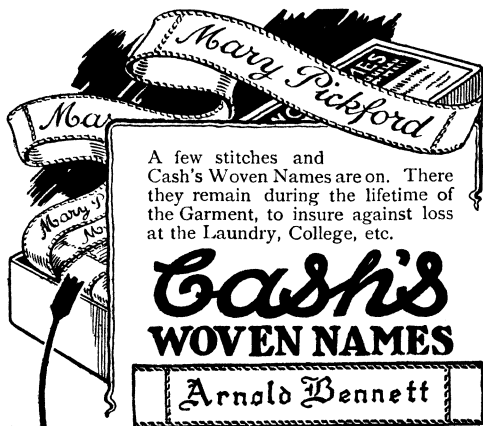
PHONE: ILFORD 1625



The bogey man is routed by the sandman in the bedrooms where Price's Night Lights burn steadily. No monster shadows lurk in darkened corners. These comforting lights dispel the childish terrors of the night. Their subdued glow encourages gentle sleep.

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**PRICE'S PATENT CANDLE CO. LTD.**  
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Style No. 5.

These dainty seals of ownership are neat, fadeless and inexpensive. There are many styles to choose from, and your Draper can supply within a few days. Make up your mind to mark lingerie, socks, handkerchiefs, etc., in your own particular style and the outlay will be repaid fourfold.

Prices, White Ground	
12 doz. (144 names)	5/-
6 " { 72 "	3/9
3 " { 36 "	2/9

Write for the free samples and literature to-day, and so avoid that extreme annoyance and loss through garments going astray, by affixing Cash's Woven Names, which perfectly solve all linen-marking troubles. Address your application to:—

**J. & J. CASH, Ltd., Dept. F.6, COVENTRY.**

Send for Free Samples of Cash's NEW MUSLIN HEMSTITCH.

## THE MISFIT PROVERB.

HOPKINS is one of those perennially cheerful individuals who get through life on proverbs. He has a wise and ancient saw for every ill to which flesh is heir, and hands them out in profusion for the benefit of suffering humanity.

Things like clouds with silver linings, darkest hour before the dawn, and hope springing eternal are his stock in trade. He comes out strongest, perhaps, on the subject of the weather. Be it ever so unseasonable, he can produce a motto to prove that it might be worse; his favourite form of consolation for a bleak day in summer is that the sun is shining in another part of the world.

Only once have I seen him dashed. It was when we suddenly lapsed from a heat-wave to winter. Entering the club smoke-room one afternoon he heard a man grumbling about the

A MAN took home a booklet on Esperanto, and during a meal a guest regaled the party with extracts pronounced according to the instructions supplied.

At last there came a strange-sounding word, evidently pronounced with great difficulty.

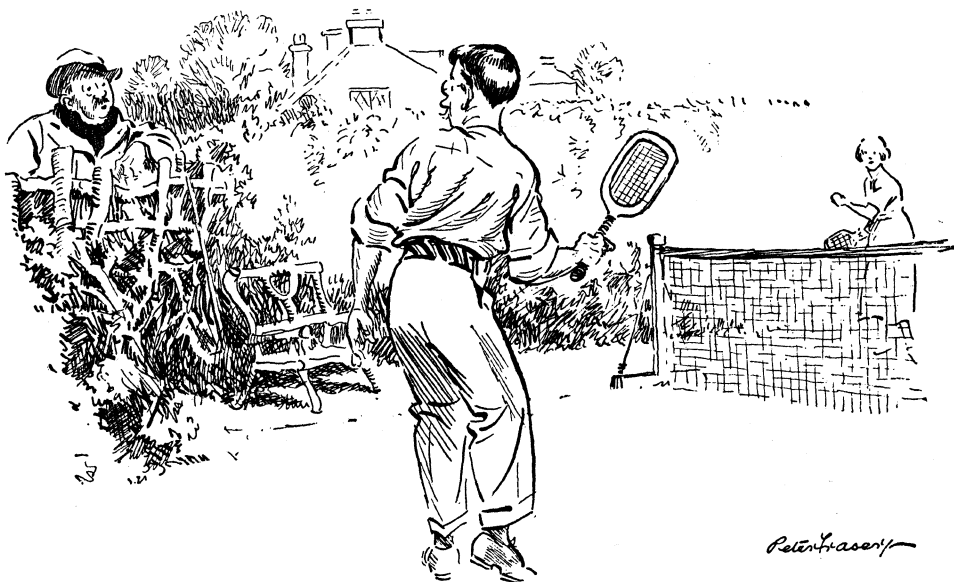
"Is that really Esperanto?" asked the host innocently.

"No," was the reply; "a fish-bone."



"HAVE you a good, clean room for the night?" asked the tired traveller of the proprietor of the Slocum Hotel.

"Certainly," replied the latter, "if you'll wait just a minute. The fellow that was in there last night left the window open when he went to bed, an' we ain't quite got all the soot cleaned out yet."



THE INFLUENCE OF "THE PICTURES."

RUSTIC (rendered romantic by visits to the local cinema, hearing girl call 'love' and watching man miss the ball): 'Urry up an' play a bit better before her love turns to hate.

cold. "Cheer up, old fellow," he exclaimed, "the sun is shining in Australia!" But the old fellow turned on him and snarled, "Liar! It's midnight there now."



A MAN once complained to a broker that he couldn't get back a loan of one hundred pounds from a debtor. Being advised to sue, the unlucky creditor had to confess that he had no note or other written acknowledgment of the debt.

"Write to him," said the financier, "and tell him that you must have two hundred pounds back at once."

"But it was only one hundred pounds," objected the other man.

"Exactly. He will write back, and then you will have your acknowledgment."

## TONGUE-TIED.

'Tis not those things I haven't *done*  
'Twixt dawn of day and set of sun  
That I count over, one by one.

Upon my sleepless bed;  
But, rather, what I most deplore  
Are opportunities galore  
I've missed off fellow-men to score—  
The things I might have *said*!

Throughout the night my mind is lit  
With epigram and shafts of wit,  
*Bon mot* each circumstance to fit,  
And argument of weight.  
Ah, why, I wonder, should it be  
That all my brightest repartee  
Persistently occurs to me

Twelve hours or so too late?

R. N. E. Higginbotham.



## After a train journey

TRAIN travelling is always hard on the complexion. The dirt and dust clog up the pores; the wind roughens the skin. After any long journey, your skin needs attention.

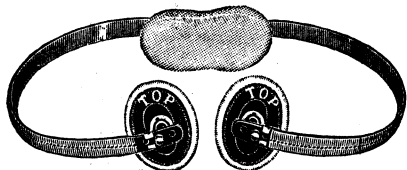
It is not enough just to wash off the dirt of the journey, because then you leave all the minute portions of dried and dead cuticle to choke the clean healthy skin underneath. What you must do is gently to massage the skin with pure Mercolized Wax before you go to bed. You should do this always if you want to have a perfect complexion, but particularly after any journey. While you sleep the Mercolized Wax imperceptibly dissolves away all the minute particles of the old dried up cuticle which would otherwise clog up the pores and leaves the young, healthy skin that is underneath as pure and clean and fresh as Nature meant it to be.

Thousands of our most famous beauties use this simple Mercolized Wax treatment every night. They have proved that this logical assistance of Nature's method is the one sure way to a perfect complexion. Get a jar at any chemist to-day, and use it before you go to bed.

## MERCOLIZED WAX

Guaranteed not to encourage the growth of the hair. Contains only the purest ingredients. Two sizes only, 2/- and 3/6.

ESTABLISHED FOR OVER 100 YEARS.



### SALMON ODÉ Patent BALL AND SOCKET TRUSSES

are still unapproachable in efficiency for all cases of Hernia, and they still enjoy that confidence throughout the Medical Profession which has made them so famous for over 100 years. Those wearing any other form of Truss, especially Elastic or Web Trusses, are invited to write to-day and prove for themselves the unique superiority of the Salmon Odé Patent Ball and Socket Truss.

Particulars Post Free.

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Absolutely  
Indelible.  
No Heating  
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The World's  
Champion Marksman.

COOPER, DENNISON & WALKDEN, Limited,  
7 & 8, ST. BRIDE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

## CROSS-WORDITIS.

Our radio's neglected and at bridge we never play,  
We don't go out to dances but at home we always  
stay;  
The cross-word puzzle fever we have got upon the  
brain  
And all our conversation's in the undermentioned  
strain:

Can you tell me a word that starts with C  
Which is something to do with the wing of  
a bee?  
Or the name of a mountain in Timbuctoo,  
And a Chinese statesman who ends in U?

Dear Aunt Maria was so precise, she'd always sit  
and knit,  
But since the craze has caught her, well, she  
hasn't done a bit.

To the butcher, and the baker, and the milkman  
she will say:

Who's the ancient monarch whose hair was  
red?

What's the Greek for kippers and French  
for bread?

Describe a chop when it isn't chump,  
And the sort of camel which has no hump.

*R. H. Roberts.*



THE health authorities of a certain city,  
receiving word that a house in the foreign  
quarter was becoming offensive to passers-by,  
sent two of its inspectors to investigate.

Led on by a strong odour and a puzzling  
medley of noises, they climbed a narrow pre-  
cipitate stairway to a large attic, where they



TOO LATE.

YOUNG REPORTER: I'm "The Daily Honk," come to do the robbery.  
OUR VILLAGE P.C.: You're too late, my lad—the robbery 'as bin done.

With father, mother, Uncle James, it's their idea  
of bliss

To seize encyclopædias and make remarks like this:  
Have you heard of a flower that blooms in  
May

With fourteen letters and one of 'em K?

Can you think of a different word for spats,  
And what's the synonym for large male  
cats?

There's Sarah in the kitchen, she has ceased to  
sweep and cook,

For she's recently invested in a shilling puzzle  
book;

She seeks the kind assistance of the postman every  
day,

*Facing Third Cover.]*

found a family of seven, a flock of chickens, two  
pigs and—could their eyes be deceiving them?—  
a full-grown cow. They stared in amazement  
at the cow and at the two foot-wide stairs.

"How—how did you get it up here?" one of  
them asked.

The answer seemed perfectly obvious. Said  
the man of the house, with a shrug: "We  
brought her up when she was a calf."



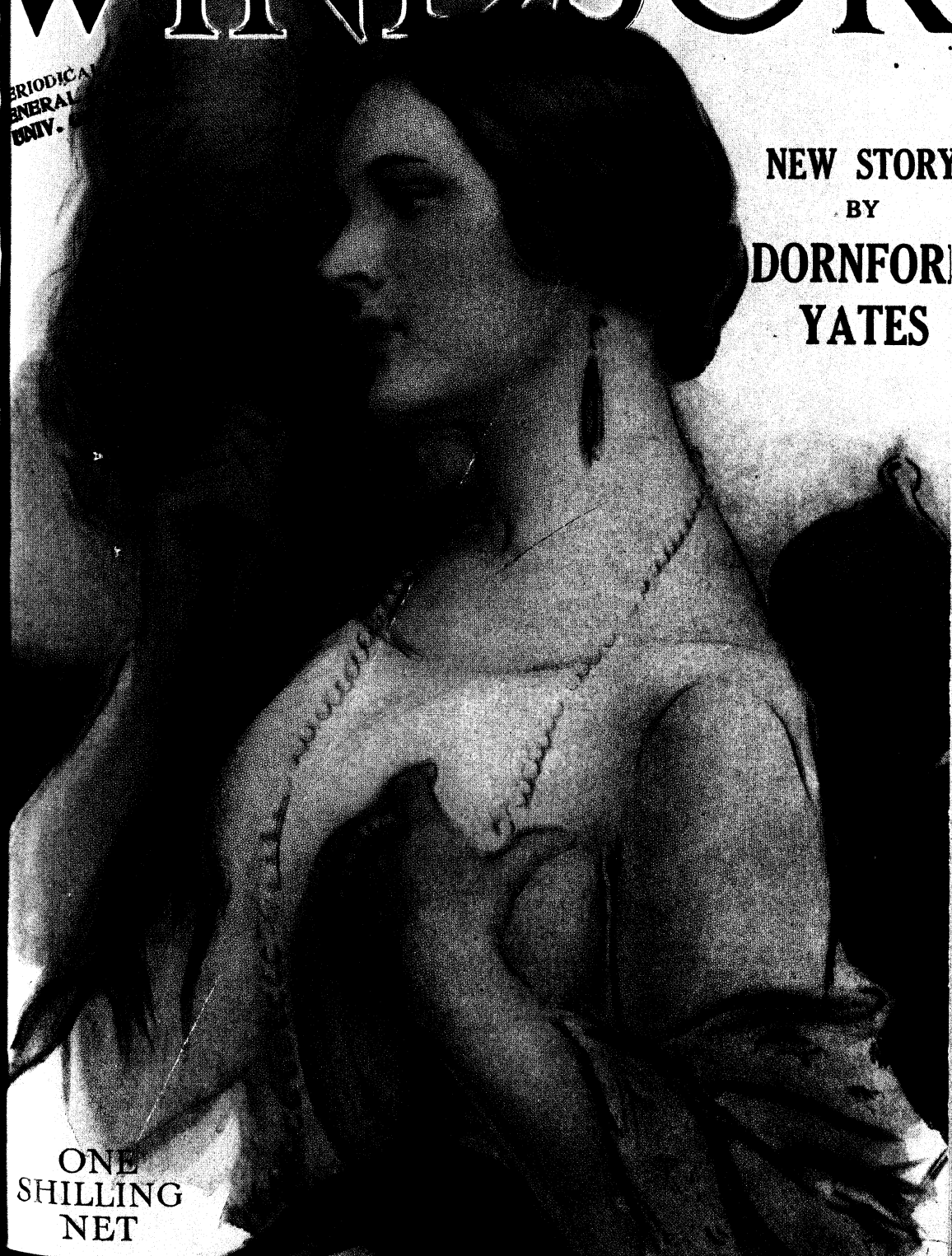
OLD GENTLEMAN: Why are you digging up  
this road again, my man?

EXCAVATOR: Trying to find my pocket-  
handkercher wot got buried by haccident last  
time, guvnor.

# THE NOVEMBER WINDSOR

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NEW STORY  
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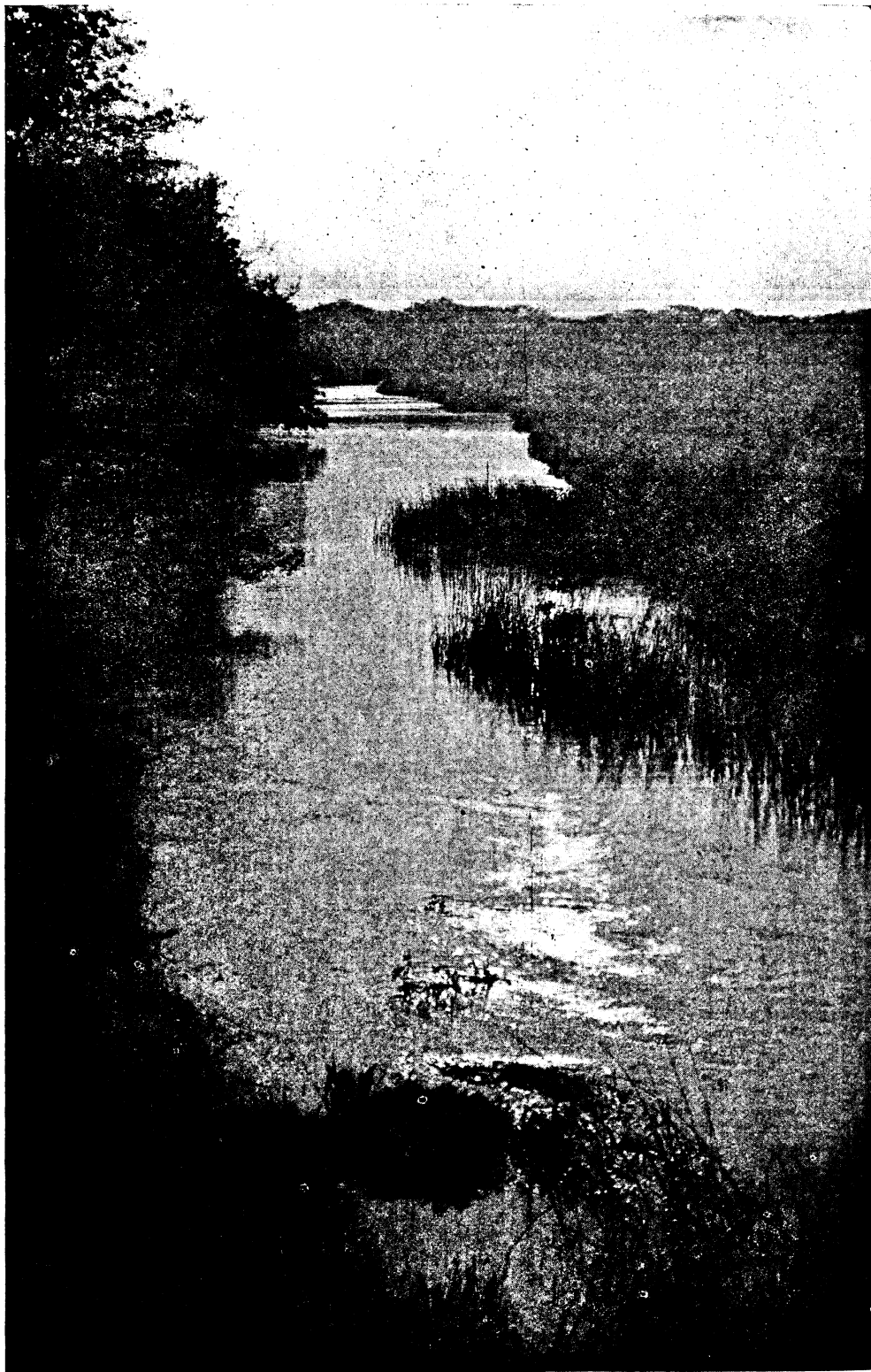
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EVENING ON THE STOUR.

*A photographic study by Judges', Limited, Hastings.*



"'The day I saw you,' he said, 'I fell in love with you.'"

# ON VELVET

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "As Other Men Are," "And Five Were Foolish," "Anthony Lyveden,"  
"Berry and Co.," "The Courts of Idleness," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"WELL, I hope you're right," said Pomfret, with his eyes on Eulalie's back. "Personally, I should be loth to take my direction from a mule—especially if my compass was offering other advice. But then I'm funny like that."

"But the compass isn't any good," said Patricia, following his gaze. "It's being upset."

"That," said Pomfret, "is a convenient assumption which nobody can begin to prove. All you can honestly say is that we don't happen to fancy the way it tells us

to go. And there I'm with you. I defy anyone born of woman to produce a more poisonous travesty of board and lodging than that afforded by the village we have just evacuated. I'd rather stay at a sewage-farm. And will somebody just look back and say if we can still smell it? I want to turn round."

"It looks ravishing from here," said Simon, with his chin on his shoulder. "The beams of that burned-down house stand out so well, and——"

"What, not the one commanding the deserted midden?" said Pomfret brokenly.

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"That's right," said Simon. "And there's an advertisement flapping on that hoarding you wanted to sketch. It's really . . ."

Here the bridle-path swerved to avoid the spur of a haggard mountain, and a moment later Stelthe and its loathsome bulwarks had disappeared.

Pomfret took off his hat and gave his head to the breeze.

"Out of sight, out of mind," he said. "Let's try to do it, shall we? Let's expunge Stelthe and all its works from the mental register. And now, where was I? Oh, I know. Why, because we dislike trekking East by North, must we throw ourselves to the mules? If we retrace our steps as far as——"

"We all know," said Eulalie, over her shoulder, "what's at the back of your mind. And that's that the mules won't necessarily head for the nearest beer-engine."

"Beer-engines to you," said Pomfret shortly. "And many of them. All I'm trying to do is to lodge a feeble protest against running up the colours of congenital insanity. I fear it's hopeless, but as I'm getting tired of being asked why I didn't 'say so at the time,' I may as well burst that air-ball and here and now formally demur. Hang it all, if your brains haven't seized, consider the blinkin' facts. . . . We are looking for Etchechuria—a country which does not appear on the maps, but which we are trying to believe is somewhere in this vicinity. We take care not to ask the way, because we don't want to be removed or followed about, so we're reduced to systematically scouring the neighbourhood. Well, a system may be tedious, but at least it has its points. One of these is that the chances of death by exposure are more remote. Among others are the possibilities of obtaining food, dry clothes, imitation rest and other little luxuries which an over-civilisation has taught us to value. Now it is suddenly proposed to abandon all system, bury the compass and, turning the mules loose, follow their ugly footprints into the blue."

"Not into the blue," said Patricia. "Straight to Etchechuria. You see. I've never been more certain. Why did they jib? Till Thursday they'd been like lambs. Then, all of a sudden——"

"Yes, you can leave it there," said Pomfret heavily. "Then, all of a sudden, they shed that admirable similitude."

"Exactly," said Patricia. "Why? Be-

*cause we weren't going their way.* They're Etchechurian mules, and they want to go home. If you want any further evidence, look at them now."

The difference in Balak and Balaam was certainly amazing.

Heads up, ears pricked, eager-eyed, they were moving fast and well and showing no trace whatever of the distemper of mind and body with which they had been ridden two hours before.

"That's the injection," said Pomfret. "If you'd had half a pint of strychnine pumped into your veins, you'd be getting a move on."

Simon looked over his shoulder.

"What will you bet me," he said, "that when we come to the spot where they stuck in their toes, if we let them go, they don't turn sharp to the left?"

"That's almost a certainty," said Pomfret. "There were some very ugly gorges that side, full of thorn bushes. The offal they've smelt is probably a gorge or two away. As soon as they've found it they'll want a good healthy roll. We'd better take their packs off when the smell gets very powerful. It'll save everyone trouble, and they'll be able to get down to it better and work it right into their coats."

"There's the Leaning Churn," said Eulalie, laughing. "We're not far now."

"And there's the sun," said Patricia. "For the very first time since Thursday there's the sun. And that fat man with the mules tells us we're wrong."

Pomfret protruded his tongue.

The strange-looking hill was certainly bathed in sunshine, and, though the four were actually still in shadow, half a mile further on the path they were treading ran into a patch of light.

There was no doubt about it. Rightly or wrongly, Nature was plainly suggesting that four days ago they had strayed from the proper path, and even Pomfret, who would still have preferred to refit at the village at which they had rested before they proceeded to Stelthe, made no pretence of attempting to conceal his excitement.

Presently they came to the spot where the mules had discharged their burdens, and a moment later they passed into the sunshine.

"Another furlong," breathed Pomfret. "As soon as we're round this shoulder we'll be able to see the place. And Simon had better take Balak. If they're going to dart across country, I'd rather dart with one than with two. I love being extended—it's

a glorious feeling. But to be extended in more than one direction at the same time is too advanced for me—especially if one of them passes anything on the wrong side.”

With a smile, Simon turned and took Balak's rein.

“I don't imagine,” he said, “they're going off like crackers. I think they'll nose round a bit first. Have a pull at the grass, you know, and——”

“You see that fountain?” said Pomfret, pointing ahead. “That gush of water just by the side of the path?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that is the actual spot where I dropped the rein. I didn't think I'd be able to be so precise, but now that I see it I remember it perfectly. It's only a piece of piping stuck into the mountain side, but the water's good and cold, and during the altercation Balaam backed straight into it and got the shock of his life. It was the one bit of luck I had.”

Simon touched his wife on the arm.

“Women and children to the rear,” he said gently. “Don't give our friends a lead.” The girls fell back. “But if they seem doubtful we might do a halt at the spring just to give them a chance.”

Except for the slap of hoofs, the cavalcade proceeded in absolute silence. As it approached the fountain the excitement became intense.

The two muleteers went forward with such nonchalance as they could command. Immediately behind them, looking neither to the right nor to the left, Balak and Balaam were plodding briskly ahead. Hardly daring to breathe, Patricia Beaulieu and Eulalie brought up the rear.

The fountain was ten paces away—seven—four—two . . . The men were abreast of it . . . past . . . Pomfret was slowing up. . . .

Suddenly the mules stopped dead.

Without a word, Simon and Pomfret turned.

For one long moment the mules stared them in the face: then, as though their heads were controlled by a single lever, they turned and looked past the fountain into the hills. . . .

Pomfret was speaking.

“All right,” he said quietly. “Go on. Five no trumps, it is. Make 'em.”

As if in answer, the mules appeared to consult. Then Balak advanced to the fountain and, thrusting his nose into the rough rock basin, drank long and deep. When he had finished, Balaam did the same.

For a moment or two they stood staring over the rill into a short steep valley. Then they went for the bank. . . .

Their packs rocking, by dint of kicking and scrambling somehow they fought their way up, while their respective captains, determined neither to let them go nor to embarrass their ascent, clambered alongside.

Viewed from the bridle-path, the spectacle of fourfold endeavour was ludicrous in the extreme, and when Pomfret, who was being beaten by Balaam, found it impossible to avoid a welter of bramble and, with an anticipant yell, slammed his way through, Eulalie and Patricia clasped each other in an agony of mirth.

The valley, however, was easy enough to traverse, and when the leading-reins had been lengthened so that Pomfret and Simon could walk behind their charges, it was possible to maintain a reasonable order of march.

From there onward they moved in single file. Indeed, for the most part the going permitted no other order. Sometimes Balak went first, with Simon behind: at other times Balaam and Pomfret would lead the way. The girls followed after.

Without hesitation the mules went steadily forward—up out of the valley, over a mountain's breast, down a breakneck slope into a hollow, along the edge of a gorge, then to the water below and up through hanging woods to the heights again. There was no path that human eye could follow, but now and again it seemed as though they were treading an ancient trail which Time and Nature had demolished in their immemorial way.

The pace was severe, but Simon was hard as nails, while the girls, not being roped to a strenuous pioneer, could go as they pleased. Pomfret, however, who alone of the four was accustomed to a leisurely progress upon a tolerable road, suffered an inconvenience of mind and body such as he had never dreamed of. With the minimum of time to consider the circumvention of obstacles, the negotiation of broken ground, the navigation of streams, he found himself compelled to conform to a steady three miles an hour—a state of things from which, though monstrous, there was no appeal, for while he was consumed with indignation, yet he dared not by word or deed protest lest he should rout the spirit of leadership which had apparently descended upon the mules.

So, with an occasional halt, the astounding

march went on—by wood and water, by valley and mountain-side, in and out of the sunshine under a gay blue sky.

Simon did what he could to mark their course, but the pace was against him, and after an hour and a half it was perfectly plain not only that they were hopelessly lost, but that any attempt to recover the way they had come would be nothing but waste of time.

Discussion was out of the question. Even during the halts hardly a word was exchanged. For one thing, excitement was running too high for talk—already they were knee-deep in Mystery: soon they would be standing on the shore of Adventure itself. For another, the rests were short and too welcome to be abused.

When they stopped, the mules were made much of, their packs were straightened and their feet examined for stones: then the girls would take the reins and sit down where they could: thus relieved, Pomfret would lie on his back and close his eyes, while Simon would look about him and, strolling this way and that, endeavour to get his direction and reckon how far they had come. So for ten minutes or so. Then Balak would lift his head and blink at Balaam, and Balaam would blink back. Then, plainly with one consent, they would turn to resume the march.

It was nearly three o'clock when the six emerged from a thicket upon an admirable lawn of about an acre in size and so remarkably shaped and situated as for a moment to bewilder the sight.

It was a great oval of grass, one end of which appeared to protrude into space, while on all other sides it was walled with seemingly impenetrable foliage. Right in the middle a brook of clear water was flowing down all its length and feeding an oval-shaped pool which lay close to the open end. The sides of the lawn sloped gently to the water, and the general impression conveyed was that of a gigantic dish of which the pool at the end was the gravy-well.

The open end of the sward was, in fact, the edge of a precipice, and might well have been expected to afford a magnificent view, but a silver haze was drifting a hundred feet down, and though this seemed too airy and elusive seriously to embarrass the eye, in fact it effectually obscured whatever lay beneath.

An overflow from the pool passed through a natural culvert beneath the lip of the

lawn and, leaping clear of the crag, plunged into the haze. Though upon the lawn there was no wind, a steady breeze was blowing across the face of the cliff, stiff enough to carry the fall considerably out of plumb: yet, so far as could be seen, the latter kept its shape to hang like a shining rope that has been hitched to one side.

To judge from the sun, the sward faced directly South—roughly half of it was in shadow and invitingly cool: its grass was fine and dry and its turf smooth: if men or beasts had been there they had left no trace, and the pleasant murmur of the brook alone disturbed that majesty of silence which is the prerogative of high places.

Balaam, who was leading, slowed up till Balak had drawn alongside. Then the two passed slowly across the pleasance till they stood upon the edge of the cliff. For a while they stood quietly together, staring down upon the haze: then they turned away and began to graze. . . .

Pomfret lay down.

"D'you think we're to stop here?" breathed Patricia.

"I hope so," said Simon. "It's quite good enough for me. But, hang it all, did you ever see such a thing?"

As was to be expected, the question released a torrent of fervid commentary to which Pomfret alone did not contribute.

At length—

"Are you frightfully done?" said Eulalie, sitting down by his side.

"My dear," said Pomfret, "I'm moribund. I'm accustomed to a good broad path and a gentlemanly pace—with frequent rests. Moreover, to be perfectly frank, my rate of consumption is about eight miles to the gallon. And not water, either. I don't suppose you knew that, because up to now I've generally travelled alone. But for those two blunt-nosed lepers"—he indicated the mules—"there's no excuse. What did they want to burst along for? They've never done it before. They know my rate of progress. And I've never hustled them."

"They probably had some reason," said Patricia.

"What reason?" said Pomfret, sitting up. "If we aren't to stop here, we might have: if we are—well, it's only just three . . . I know it's all very marvellous and dream-like and incredible and all the other verbal garlands you've been hanging about its neck, but if one's got to be disembowelled to see a miracle, much as one enjoys it, one's apt to think for a moment before yelling

'Encore.' They may be leading us to Etchechuria—judging from our present surroundings, I should think we were nearly there. You don't find places like this in any ordinary world—but I don't see any reason for calling them lovely names. We happen to be here because we've held on to the reins, but all they've bothered about is to make their blinkin' way home. No emotions of gratitude or respect, no——"

"Offal," said a voice.

Everyone started, Eulalie leapt to her feet and Pomfret looked slowly round.

"Which of you's being funny?" he said at length.

"Don't—don't be silly," said Simon. "It's none of us."

Slowly Pomfret rose.

"Now, don't let's get windy," he said, stepping to Eulalie's side. "Let's keep our bullet heads. Somebody said 'Offal.' Just like that. 'Offal.' Am I right?"

"Yes," quavered the girls.

"Well, it looks," said Pomfret, fingering his chin, "it looks as if they were referring to a casual remark I made about five hours ago."

"It does," said Simon. "And let me say here and now that I hope you won't make any more. You've obviously offended someone."

"I agree," said Eulalie. "I don't believe in spirits, but——"

"I refuse to be terrorised," said Pomfret. "If I meet a man with a remarkable nose, I reserve to myself the right of audible comment upon the organ, provided its owner is out of earshot. And that brings me back to where I was. Whoever said 'Offal' just now must have heard *and resented* my remark."

Balak looked up, munching.

"O-o-oh," cried Patricia, catching at Simon's arm. "*It was him.* Look at his face."

Balak emptied his mouth and wrinkled his nose.

"Will you take my pack off?" he said. "Or doesn't it matter? You see, as that mountebank said, I want 'a good healthy roll.'"

Balaam began to shake with laughter.

"\* \* \* \* \*  
"I don't care," said Pomfret. "I'm not going to be called a mountebank by a mule for anyone. It's not decent."

"Do be quiet," said Patricia. "They'll hear you."

"I hope they do," said Pomfret, "the

lop-eared slow bellies. 'Mountebank.' And to think that I've——"

"Brother," said Simon, "calm yourself. After all, mules will be mules. I confess it's disconcerting to have them bursting into speech, but, once you're over that stile, I don't know what else you'd expect. Besides, perhaps they don't suffer fools gladly. . . . What about looking for a country for over six weeks only to walk bang past its portals and, ignoring their expostulation, lug our guides with us? As soon as my mouth'd work I don't think I should stop at 'mountebank.'"

"I can quite believe that," said Pomfret acidly. "But I always thought dumb animals were different. I thought they remembered kindness. Look at Androcles and the lion."

"If it came to that," said Eulalie, "I daresay they'd spare your life. In fact, they're probably as fond of you as you are of them—if that's possible."

"All I really want," said Pomfret shakily, "is a chance to die for them."

"But you both believe in abuse," continued Eulalie. "And now, since they're able to talk, if you've really finished eating, let's ask them where we are. And other things. I mean—there they are, full of perfectly good information. Why shouldn't we broach the cask?"

"Why not?" said Simon, rising.

"If we do," said Patricia, "for Heaven's sake, Pomfret, don't be rude. We don't want to put their backs up."

"I shall say nothing at all," said Pomfret, with dignity. "I shall not converse with them. If you like to hobnob with a couple of pin-toed hybrids and be treated like dirt for your pains, that's your affair. If they apologise, I'll strap them and give them water and food. But I shan't address them, and I trust they won't address me. 'Mountebank.' . . ."

The mules had been pegged out as usual, and Simon crossed the sward to where they were.

As he approached they regarded him.

"Er, I'm just going to untie you," he said self-consciously, "and bring you over to our pitch. Mrs. Beaulieu——"

"Who's Mrs. Beaulieu?" said Balaam.

In spite of himself, Simon started.

"My wife," he said, pointing. "That girl sitting——"

"I thought you called her 'Patricia.'"

"So I do," said Simon hastily. He swallowed. "'Mrs. Beaulieu's' another of her

names. Well, Patricia and Eulalie want to ask you some questions."

Balaam regarded Balak.

"What about it?" he said. "Shall we go?"

"It is an improvement on Stelthe, isn't it?" said Balak pleasantly.

"D'you mind not mentioning that place?" said Balaam. "I dislike its memory."


"It's a paradise to Plug," said Balak.

"Pomfret would have liked Plug," said Balaam, "wouldn't he? No beer, no pig's feet, no nothing."

The two laughed heartily.

Nature will out.

Before Pomfret had recaptured the power of speech, the short struggle was over, decency had been thrown to the winds, and Simon, Patricia



"'Excuse me.' He took a short run and jumped over a blade of grass. 'How did you sleep?'"

Balak nodded.

With the apologetic air of a warder who is pinioning a king, Simon unfastened the ropes and proceeded to rejoin the others with the mules in his wake. . . .

"Good—good evening," said Patricia. "What a beautiful spot you've brought us to."

and Eulalie were bowing before a tempest of outrageous mirth.

Grimly Pomfret surveyed them.

When the storm had at length subsided, he addressed the mules.

"Speaking as a mere mountebank, I



can't tell you how glad I am—in fact, we all seem to be—to know that the contemplation of my discomfort has entertained you. I only wish I'd realised it before. Then I could have assaulted myself or shown you my bedroom at Stelthe or something. It is also delicious to appreciate that you have remarked my partiality to certain kinds of refreshment, although, to be honest, I cannot remember ever regaling myself upon the luscious repast which your friends' feet, if they are at all like yours, must inevitably afford. But what really takes my fancy by the throat is your delicacy of thought.

Indeed, the reflection that beneath your, er, outward shape, the beauty of which is so subtle as to be sometimes almost elusive, there is raging a susceptibility to consideration seldom encountered in this unkind world is so edifying as to be almost spiritual. And now I shall wait upon you—dry-clean your dear bodies? Or would you rather discuss the way I blow my nose?"

His words were received with every circumstance of delight.

Balak laughed till the tears rolled down his jowl, while Balaam squealed and cow-kicked his companion in an ecstasy of mirth.



"Perfectly, thanks," said Eulalie."



"You know," said the former weakly, "I could listen to Pomfret all night. He's so—so responsive. Pull his shapeless leg, and it comes away in your hand."

So soon as he could speak—

"Lead me out of earshot," said Pomfret faintly. "I've always had a high blood-pressure, and I don't think one ought to die so soon after food. . . . And I've groomed the playful darlings for seven soul-shaking weeks. . . . And—and tried not to hurt them. . . ."

He laughed wildly

"That's why you're here," said Balaam solemnly.

The four stared at him.

"That's right," said Balak. "We could have gone last Thursday over and over again and left you to it. But you—especially Pomfret—have done us extremely well, and, speaking as a mere beast of burden, we've appreciated your attention."

"And now," said Balaam, "listen. We don't want to be cross-questioned, but we'll tell you one or two things. To-morrow, with luck, we shall be within The Pail."

"Sometimes called 'Etchechuria,'" said Balak, swinging his head towards the depths. "But its proper name is The Pail. It's surrounded by a couple of tracts called 'Velvet' and 'Balk.' Velvet's nothing but a mountain—we're on it now: and we've just come out of Balk. This actual spot is The Dish, and directly below us is The Clock."

"It's a wonderful clock," said Balaam. "The only one in the world by Wind and Water. They made it and they keep it going. It's always running down, but it never stops."

"The Leaning Churn and The Skep," continued Balak, "are two of The Overthrows which stand at intervals round Balk. There are about fifty in all, and they're warranted to overthrow any instrument made by man. Hence 'The Lost Country.' It was rather clever of Simon to tumble to that. But they're not the only bulwarks. What about Rome?"

"Rome," explained Balaam, "is in Balk. It's that little patch of greensward that Patricia and Simon found. Once you're within its radius, all roads lead there. Whichever way you go you always come back. Rome's a stinker. Then there are the Shadows. It was a Shadow that Eulalie climbed and found the cairn on—a shadow hill. It looked just like its original, but it was only a copy. All the Shadows are

beautifully made—correct to an inch: but I don't understand that cairn. We shall have to report that."

"And now," said Balak, "for the moment we'll leave it there. Talking with these sort of mouths is rather a strain. Don't bother to tie us up—we're not going to go. And you needn't groom us to-day: it—it isn't worth while. And we'll water and feed ourselves."

"One thing more," said Balaam. "I fear we came rather fast. I may be wrong, but I thought I saw Pomfret perspiring, and I know that's against his rules. But we rather wanted to put in an appearance to-day, and the office closes at three. Happily we were just in time."

"Incidentally," said Balak, "unless you feel you must, I shouldn't put up those tents. You won't catch cold on Velvet, and as for Convention—well, the ancient name of The Dish is The Robing Room. From an hour before sunset to an hour after dawn the old veil will be in place. Shove the girls on the other side of that brook, and as long as you don't cross it between those hours you won't see them and they won't see you. You can hear one another all right, but the eyes won't work."

"That's right," said Balaam. "You see."

"Don't be a fool," said Balak, lifting a leg. "That's just what they can't do."

"You shut your face," said Balaam, working into position. "And don't waste your air upon things which you don't understand. I was referring to mental perception—the action of the b-b-brain, brother. A grey thing, like a sponge. You must have heard of it." With that, he kicked Balak well and truly upon the stifle.

That his victim should squeal with pain was natural enough, but Balaam squealed just as loudly and then fell to licking Balak upon the neck.

"Oh, you poisonous ass," cried the latter between his teeth. "And we've done so well up to now. An' only ten hours to go."

"I know, I know," wailed Balaam. "Don't rub it in. Oh, I could kick myself."

"Well, don't, for Heaven's sake," shrieked Balak. "I can't bear it." He turned to the four. "This isn't loving-kindness," he added brokenly. "I'd like to crack his ribs. But it's no good spoiling my stomach to spite his paunch. You'll see what I mean to-morrow." He turned upon Balaam. "And now stop licking, you fool. D'you want to have a sore neck?"

For a moment it looked as though active hostilities must be renewed. Balaam stopped licking to regard his stable-companion with the tail of a glassy eye. Obviously ready to counter, Balak stared wickedly back. . . . Then Balaam expired with great violence and turned away.

"We shall start to-morrow," he said, "at nine o'clock. I trust that Brother Pomfret will be in time. And here, at the risk of irrelevance, let me say that the beer they keep in The Pail has to be consumed to be believed." He paused significantly. Pomfret averted his head. "It's a very comfortable liquor."

"Fine old ale," nodded Balak. "Straight from The House. Why, he'll be outside a gallon before he knows it."

Simon's shoulders began to shake, but Patricia leaned forward. "'The House'?" she breathed. "Not . . ."

"That's right," said Balaam, turning. "The House that Jack built."

\* \* \* \* \*

Dawn was touching the heaven when Simon awoke.

For a moment his eyes wandered: then he sat up and looked about him.

The Dish looked as peaceful as ever, its lip outlined sharply against a golden sky. Three paces away Pomfret lay fast asleep. Beyond the brook the lawn might have been empty, but that was because of the veil, which in no way obscured the landscape, but only concealed its tenants and all that was theirs. The girls had been there last night, and were presumably still in occupation. Of the mules there was no sign at all.

For a moment Simon fingered the cord about his arm, the end of which seemed to be trailing in the water, but was, in fact, fastened to Patricia's wrist: then he rose and, taking care to keep the cord slack, put on a pair of tennis-shoes and stepped gently across the stream.

Eulalie and Patricia were sleeping peacefully, their belongings scattered about them in feminine disarray, but the mules were not to be seen.

After a little hesitation Simon recrossed the water and unfastened the cord. . . .

Patricia awoke.

For a minute or two she lay still, lazily surveying the sky, listening to the song of the brook and drawing deep breaths of the cool, fragrant air with infinite satisfaction. Then she sat up and, propping herself on her arms, regarded Eulalie.

The latter looked curiously childish. Her head was thrown back, her little lips were parted and her glorious curls tumbled about a glowing face. This was eager and careless, suggesting an acquaintance with nothing but the sweet of the world and an open, beating heart, free of the pretty garden of innocent desires.

It occurred to Patricia suddenly that this was a new Eulalie—at least, not new, but different to the maiden of yesterday.

"That's right," she murmured. "That's how she looked before Murillo. Since then . . ." She left the sentence there and clapped a small hand to her mouth. "I wonder," she breathed. Then—"Oh, of course that's it. And I've been praying for this for the last two months. But, oh, my darling, what a dark pair you are. If I hadn't seen him yesterday watching you walking along. . . ." She threw up her head and shook her thick dark hair more or less into place. "Well, that is a relief. Besides," she added gravely, "it'll be very convenient."

For a while she sat, nursing her tender discovery: then, after carefully listening, she unfastened the cord and, throwing aside her blankets, stole to the edge of the cliff. . .

The sun was up and over the edge of Velvet, playing upon the mists that masked The Pail. These were in ferment, swirling and sweeping and wreathing as though possessed—a raging grandeur of iridescence, slow and graceful of movement as the clouds above, yet rising and falling and drifting all ways at once till the eye seemed to have assumed the ear's office and to be gazing upon some stately evolution of a thousand harmonies.

Unaware that her husband was standing spellbound twenty paces away, Patricia determined to rouse him that he might see the wonder. She therefore returned to where she had left the cord and, picking this up, pulled gently upon it, with the result that a moment later, somewhat to her consternation, the rope lay entire at her feet.

Meanwhile, Simon had decided to wake his wife.

The two crossed the stream simultaneously. . . .

"'A little slumber,'" protested Pomfret drowsily, "'a little folding of the hands—'"

"Where's Simon?" cried Patricia, shaking him.

"Jus' over there," murmured Pomfret.

"He isn't. He's gone."

"Can' be helped," said Pomfret, turning

over. "An' don' shake me like that. I've had a mos' tryin' dream. I dreamed the mules were——"

"Will you wake up?" screamed Patricia. "I tell you, Simon's disappeared."

Pomfret sat up, blinking.

After a prolonged scrutiny of Simon's blankets—

"So he has," he said, yawning. He turned to Patricia. "I dreamed—— Oh, how dare you? Go back to the women's quarters at once. Why, you're improperly dressed."

"What does that matter? Get up at once, you idiot, and help me look."

"Not in that night-gown," said Pomfret, averting his eyes. "The mules 'd tear me in pieces. Put on my dressing-gown."

Impatiently Patricia obeyed, while Pomfret emerged from his blankets and stood peering about him.

"Hullo, where's Eulalie?" he said sharply.

"She's all right," said Patricia, girding her loins. "Come on. Let's try the wood."

"What d'you mean—'all right'?" cried Pomfret. "She mayn't be all right at all. Supposing——"

"Pat!" shouted Simon. "Pat!"

"Hullo!" shouted Patricia. "Where are you?"

"Here," shouted Simon.

There was a moment's silence.

Then—

"He sounds quite close," said Pomfret, staring across the lawn. "What an extraordinary thing. I could have sworn. . . ."

He approached the brook, wholly oblivious of the veil and entirely obsessed by the seeming phenomenon.

It was, of course, pure misfortune, first, that Simon and Pomfret should have sought to cross the stream at the same time and place, and secondly, that each should have leapt instead of stridden.

As it was, they met with great force in mid-air and, violently repulsing each other, rebounded to subside anyhow upon their respective banks.

"Whatever's the matter?" cried Patricia.

"Matter?" said Pomfret dazedly, holding his nose. "I'm precious near dead—that's all."

"But what have you done?" cried Patricia.

"I haven't done anything," yelled Pomfret, with his feet in the flood. "I simply——" He stopped short and started. "Yes, I have. I remember now. I've fouled

the veil. That's what I've done. And where's the ugly serpent that called it a veil? It's a blasted rock-garden. That's right. I've jumped bung into a wall. Isn't that funny?"

"Wall be burned," said Simon painfully. "You've jumped into me. I wish to Heaven you'd be more careful."

"Yes, I wonder what the right answer to that is," said Pomfret brokenly. "Several suggest themselves, but they're all of them rather crude. And next time look where you're going, will you? Nevermind if you can't see. The great thing is to have looked. The physical pain will be the same, but at least you'll have a clear conscience. Is Eulalie all right?"

"I'm sorry," said Simon, laughing and limping into view. "I admit I was on my wrong side. Yes, Eulalie's all right."

"You should have given audible warning of your approach," said Pomfret. "I confess I forgot the veil. An almost total abstainer, I'm not accustomed to optical illusions. Besides, I'm only just up, and my faculties are slightly viscous. This woman aroused me to say that you weren't in sight. As most of her was, I out-sainted Martin and gave her the whole of my dressing-gown." He turned to Patricia. "And now if you're satisfied, you witch, you'd better withdraw to your covert and throw my property back. And if it goes in the water, I'll——"

"But I'm not," said Patricia. "I want you to look at the haze. That's what I tried to find Simon for."

"And I you," said her husband. "It's the most amazing sight I've ever seen. Come along."

"Can't I imagine it?" said Pomfret. "I hate that beastly cliff. I've never seen anything so high. Besides, if it's anything like the veil—well, I don't want to brush against a bear or anything. It's—it's too early."

"I insist," said Patricia. "Simon, you take him along. I'll go and wake Eulalie."

Pomfret was led off protesting, and Eulalie was roused. . . .

The exquisite travail of the haze had been witnessed, a preliminary search for the mules had been conducted without success, and the four, decently disposed upon their respective sides of the veil, were proceeding to a leisurely toilet, talking as they went.

"And now," said Pomfret, "I should like you all to kneel down. I'm going to clean my teeth."

"Well, don't let them go," said Eulalie, climbing out of her side of the pool. "Supposing they were swep' over."

"They're too long," said Simon. "They'd jam in the culvert."

"Of course," said Pomfret, "it's no more than I deserve. If I like to clean my pearls before swine——"

"Simon," said Patricia, "I'm going to wear my hair down my back."

"So'm I," said Pomfret. "I think it'll do better in the shade. And I'm going to change my legs over. I've always wanted to be splay-footed."

"I shouldn't," said Simon. "You've been bow-legged too long. Besides, Nature has a reason for everything."

"In a moment," said Eulalie, bubbling, "I shall want my shoe-horn."

"Can't you button them?" said Pomfret. "Simon hasn't scratched himself yet. Besides, you had it last and, secondly, we've lost it. Patricia."

"Yes."

"You can get up now, darling. I've changed my mind about my teeth. I'm going to b-b-bathe my b-b-body first."

"Oh, I am glad," said Mrs. Beaulieu. "But don't stay in too long—it's weakening."

Standing stripped upon the brink of the pool, Pomfret shuddered.

"It—it can't be as cold as it was at Bluebell."

"Colder," shrieked the others in hideous chorus.

"Oh, hell," said Pomfret and dived. . . .

That all four should have forgotten that the film which divided The Dish was a transient convenience is easy to understand. There was much to occupy their minds. Be that as it may, as Pomfret entered the water the veil's lease expired without so much as a premonitory flicker, revealing Simon in a shirt and an elegant pair of half-hose, Patricia, hair-brush in hand, in most of her glory, Eulalie in much less of hers, and Pomfret in the flesh and six feet six of water whose temperature was about forty degrees Fahrenheit.

It was a case for immediate action.

Everyone, except Pomfret, seized and put on the garment or substitute for clothing nearest to hand, while the exception was unanimously and continually commanded to face East and remain where he was until further notice.

Turning indignantly to demand the reason, the latter perceived Eulalie apparently clothed in a face-towel, held as a tabard, and a pair of stockings, and with an unearthly shriek vanished under water.

As he rose—

"Go away," he yelled. "Turn round. Anything. I'm——"

"To turn round," observed Eulalie, "is the last thing I shall do. Obviously. Can't you hold your breath and lie down?"

"Begone," screamed Pomfret, frantically treading water. "My heart'll give out in a second. This isn't mulled claret, you know. Back into the wood or something." He turned upon Simon. "Give me my towel, you body-snatcher. Yes, it looks very nice as a kilt, but I'm short of a bathing-machine."

"He needn't lie down," said Patricia. "As long as he looks at Simon he can keep his head out."

"I think he'd better be totally submerged," said Eulalie. "Just for the look of the thing. Besides, we shan't be long, and he might look for pearls while he's waiting. Or do oysters have to have cold water?"

"I'll give you two vixens ten seconds," said Pomfret violently. "At the end of that time, come Grief, I'm going to get out. And I'm going to face where I please. In fact, if you're still in sight, I'll chase you. One—two . . ."

The enumeration had an immediate effect.

Without wasting time upon protests which seemed certain to be unavailing, the girls withdrew to the shelter of the thicket which surrounded The Dish in 'most admired disorder' and at a pace seldom employed outside the running-track, while Simon, weak with laughter, ungirded his loins and advanced upon Pomfret with his towel.

"Nine—ten," said Pomfret, heaving himself on to the bank. "Thank you." He wrapped the towel around him and faced about. "Ah. All to ourselves. How nice. And now we needn't hurry. You know, I have a feeling that I'm going to be dressed before them, after all."

He was quite right.

Remembering his recent immersion, in spite of an indignant fire of abuse from the thicket, he completed his toilet *ad unguem*—facing West.

The shriek of fury, however, which went up when he was seen to be dissatisfied with the set of his tie and to select another was most arresting, and, after a prolonged stare in the direction from which it came, Pomfret crossed the water and advanced upon the screen of foliage.

"Did anyone speak?" he demanded. "Or was it cats?"

Patricia began to shake with laughter, and Eulalie set her white teeth.

"Will you soon be ready, Pomfret dear?" purred the former uncertainly.

"I hope so," said Pomfret. "But I'm having trouble with my naughty neck-joy, darling. And then I've got to do my hands. Where shall I find your banana-sticks?"

"Oh, my dear," wailed Patricia, "we've been punished enough."

There was a silence.

Then—

"Do you love and respect me?" said Pomfret.

"Yes, yes, we do," cried Patricia.

There was another silence.

At length—

"Golden Locks," said Pomfret.

"Yes," said Eulalie.

"Do you love and——"

"No, I don't," said Eulalie fiercely. "I hate you. And I'm perfectly happy here. I wouldn't come out if I'd fifty thousand fur-coats and a set of oilskins."

Pomfret fingered his chin.

Then he turned on his heel and strolled back the way he had come.

As he joined Simon—

"My son," he said, "I am going to look for the mules. Don't wait for breakfast."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Ime the mules," said the stranger.

"Ime the mules," repeated Pomfret thoughtfully. "I see. 'Ime.' Forgive me, but is that an exhortation or a curse? I don't know the word."

The stranger laughed.

"You asked if I'd seen the mules. Well, I tell you—ime the mules."

Pomfret regarded the fellow.

He was a merry-looking man, round and red in the face, thick-set, fat, short-legged, with bright brown eyes and an engaging laugh. His dress was curious. A crimson cotehardie surmounted his tight-fitting hose, of which one leg was crimson and the other apple-green: a hood of the same gay green covered his head and shoulders, while a liri-pipe five feet long was trailing behind him: soft grey leather shoes, long-toed and buttoned at the sides, completed his attire.

"Ime," said Pomfret. "'Ime.' I suppose that's Etchechurian for something hasty. Never mind. Why——"

The stranger slapped his thigh and laughed again.

Then he rose to his feet and made a most excellent leg.

"I," he said, "am the mules. I am. *I'm*. Silly, isn't it? Never mind. *I'm* also above grammar. I'm the mules, and the mules are me—at your service," and, with that, he straightened his back and cut a caper or two.

Pomfret put a hand to his head.

"I don't think you quite understand," he said, moistening his lips. "I am seeking two valuable, if impudent, beasts of burden. I don't expect you to believe me when I say that they can talk, but it's an unpleasant truth. Yesterday evening——"

"Oh, the doubting Thomas," said the stranger. "And I've eaten out of his hand all the way from Esteppezan. And tried not to bite him. Pomfret, this is unfriendly."

Pomfret started violently. Then he looked dazedly round.

"I retire," he said brokenly. "I can't compete any more. D'you mean to say I've groomed you for seven weeks?"

"That's right," said the other, leaping into the air. "I was transformed. You must have heard of it."

"Oh, I'm familiar with the word," said Pomfret. "It's the deed that bothers me. Never mind. It must have been very inconvenient being plural."

"Inconvenient?" cried the stranger. "Why, most of the time I was beside myself. . . . And all because I got my precedence wrong. They're very hot on precedence in The Pail. In fact, you can't be too careful. And there are stacks of Royalties. You see, I gave a small blind and, forgetting he was a King's son, I put an old enchanter below the Knave. Well, I met him in the morning, and he metamorphosed me in the afternoon. . . . Still, it might have been worse, and at least it's over now." He broke off to dance a few steps. "I've purged my Contempt. How's Eulalie?"

Pomfret stared.

"All right," he said shortly. "Why?"

"B-bless my b-brain," said the stranger. "Don't say it's off. A week ago you asked me whether you should compare her to a summer's day."

"Mercy of Heaven," said Pomfret. "Don't say you——"

"Now, don't get jumpy," said the other. "You happen to have done the right thing. I'm a matchmaker. I'm 'Our Mr. Gog' of Gog and Magog, Matchmakers. And as I'm very deep in your debt——"

"Stop," screamed Pomfret. "Stop. I mean, look here." He swallowed violently. "As it were fortuitously, certain highly delicate information has come into your possession."

"That," said Gog, twirling his liripipe, "is one way of putting it. Another would be to say that you had conveyed it to me with every circumstance of verbosity and repetition," and, with that, he leaned backwards till his face appeared between his legs.

Pomfret took off his hat and wiped his face.

"The point is," he said shakily, "that you've got it. Believing that I was addressing two beasts of burden, at once inapprehensive and dumb, I indicated that I had formed an attachment."

"I don't remember your using that phrase," said Gog thoughtfully, "but I certainly gathered that you were lovesick." With a jerk he flung up his feet and turned a somersault. "Why, you gave the whole of one morning to the way she walked."

"Did I indeed?" said Pomfret furiously. "Well, if you're not very careful I'll give the best part of a week to the way you sit down, my friend. And——"

"Hush," said Gog, laughing. "I won't give you away. And I quite agree about her walk. She moves beautifully. In fact, she's a perfect darling. Where were we?"

"I don't know where we were," said Pomfret desperately. "I'm—I'm all hot and bothered, I am. But for Heaven's sake understand this. I flatly forbid you——"

"That's right," said Gog, darting to pick a flower. "Refuse all offers of assistance and then tear everything up. Pomfret, you make me tired. You know, Eulalie wants handling. She's very fond of you, but she's—well, highly feminine. Another little flurry like this morning's, and you'll do yourself in."

"I know," said Pomfret wildly. "I know. How do you?"

"From your face, of course," said Gog, side-stepping. "You look as if you'd lost half a kingdom. Never mind. Let's talk about something else. What about b-b-botany?"

"Not—not botany," said Pomfret weakly. "Something more simple. And I wish you wouldn't jump about like that. Between surprise and agitation I'm ready to scream, any way. Oh, and why these garments?"

"Why not?" said Gog, regarding himself. "They're out of Date. Why, here she

is." He made a low bow. "Good morning, my lady. We were just talking of you. I'm the mules."

Pomfret swung on his heel to see Eulalie standing still five paces away.

"The mules?" she said, knitting her brows.

"It—it is d-difficult, isn't it?" stammered Pomfret. "But there's no doubt about it. He knows everything that's happened since Estepemazan. It seems he annoyed a magician, who thereupon altered him to Balak and Balaam. And now he's come back."

For a moment Eulalie stared.

Then—

"I see," she said slowly. "That's why, when Balaam kicked Balak——"

"Don't," cried Gog. "That was the awful part of it. Internal dissension. You know what mules are. I was always getting in my way or doing myself down over a bunch of clover or something, and the instinct to retort by violence was most insidious. Excuse me." He took a short run and jumped over a blade of grass. "How did you sleep?"

"Perfectly, thanks," said Eulalie. She turned to Pomfret. "Why did you call me?"

Pomfret leaned against a tree and covered his eyes.

"I didn't know I did call you," he said brokenly. "I'm not going to say I didn't because it's quite possible I did. I'm—I'm irresponsible. Five minutes' communion with this kaleidoscope is enough to derange a sage. Tell him to go away."

"He's gone," said the girl, watching the green and crimson flash between the trees. "I don't know why. Perhaps I drove him away. So I've done some good, after all. And next time you call——"

"You came," said Pomfret quietly. "I put it across you this morning—yet, when I called, you came."

Eulalie looked him in the face.

"I please myself," she said. "It amused me to come—to-day. To-morrow. . . ."

Pomfret took off his hat.

"The day I saw you," he said, "I fell in love with you. That was most natural. I think most men that saw you would do the same. For your sake I said nothing—I've tried to give no sign for more than two months. You see, I felt it would be awkward. Girls like you aren't made to marry, er, mountebanks. . . . And—well, it would have been awkward in so small a mess. But

now I'm telling you—throwing my poor cards down because I'm human. I can't cover up any more. I've tried to seem indifferent, but now I've got to be rotten if I'm to hide the truth. . . . Well, if I'm to be rotten to you, you must know the reason why. That much I owe my heart. It's rather comic to think I've got a heart, isn't it? Never mind. Simon and Pat won't know, and I shan't tell. But if I seem surly or rough, you'll understand, my dear, that Pomfret Tudor, Buffoon, is covering up."

There was a long silence.

At length—

"I'm glad you told me," said Eulalie quietly. "It's a great thing to clear the air. Why d'you think I came when you called just now?"

"Because you're great-hearted," said Pomfret. "It would have been beneath the dignity of anyone else, but you're so royal that you can afford to be direct, downright, handsome. No one could ever misconstrue anything you do, because it never even occurs to you that anyone ever could. Why did the dirtiest row of scoundrels that ever blackmailed a woman call you 'The Bank of England'? Because they'd seen the look in your eyes."

"Highly flattering," said Eulalie, "but beside the point. Guess again. Why did I come when you called?"

"You said . . . it amused you to come."

"I withdraw that. I wanted to come. I was glad when you called—it gave me an opportunity. I wanted to say I was sorry—"

"Eulalie!"

"—and—and—well, you see, I knew you loved me, and I thought perhaps if I came you'd tell me so."

She was in Pomfret's arms, laughing and rosy.

"But child—queen—darling, you don't mean to say. . . ."

"That's right," breathed Eulalie, slipping her arms round his neck, "I—love—you . . . very much."

"But—"

"Love me, my dear, love me. Don't

cover up any more. I want you to love me. I want you to kiss me and pick me up in your arms. I want to lay my head against yours. I want to say 'That's my man.' I want to sign myself 'Tudor.' I want to—"

"But I'm a mountebank."

"You're not. You're a king—with a flat cap on and his crown in a drawer. Don't you think I understand? Don't you think *my* eyes can see? I know you love your motley. You find it 'the only wear.' But that doesn't make you a fool. Simon Beaulieu's a prince: but you're a king."

"You've crowned me," said Pomfret Tudor, lifting his head, "my beautiful, peerless darling, that came when I called."

"You never called," whispered Eulalie. "I came on my own. I—had—to."

"That's right," said an unctuous voice. "I willed her. I tell you, I'm 'Our Mr. Gog,' of Gog and Magog, Matchmakers."

The next moment the speaker was streaking across The Dish, with his liripipe flying and Pomfret hard on his heels. As he took off for the brook, his pursuer's fingers closed upon the end of his liripipe, and, with an apprehensive bellow, 'Our Mr. Gog' passed from the vertical into the horizontal position and then fell heavily into two feet of water.

"So perish all traitors," said Pomfret grimly, and, with that, he returned to his lady, who had emerged from the thicket and was stricken helpless with laughter upon the edge of the lawn.

As the two met—

"And I never even kissed your beautiful mouth."

"Quick! Now!" said Eulalie, putting up her face. "Pat and Simon are fully engaged with Gog."

This was the truth.

They were still similarly engrossed when the two rejoined them. A dripping but genial Gog was telling his tale.

" . . . Well, when I got back, she was in his arms. It was very beautiful—quite Theocritean. You know. The nymph and the swineherd. . . ."

It was clear that Gog was incorrigible.

*The fifth episode in this series will appear in the next number.*



A TYPICAL MORNING'S GROUP OF OWNERS, WITH THEIR PETS, IN THE OUT-PATIENTS' CLINIC.

# THE ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE

## ITS TRAINING SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY

MEREDITH FRADD

**T**WO of the most pitiable sights in life are surely an infant in pain and an animal in pain. Neither creature can give that valuable information which enables those in charge to locate the seat of trouble and decide the best method by which to relieve its suffering. The infant grows up and is soon able to describe its discomfort, but a dumb animal, with its wistful look of appeal to its human custodian, ever remains entirely dependent on the insight of those who spend their lives in diagnosing, through incessant study and practice, animal ailments.

In a visit, or, as has been the case with the writer of this article, several visits, to the Royal Veterinary College, Great College Street, Camden Town, London, may be found a lesson in skill and patience which leaves one deeply impressed as well as immensely grateful to the men who are devoting their lives to the alleviation of

pain in the animal kingdom, and to research work of which the object is to overcome the diseases animals are prone to.

Systematic instruction in veterinary science in this country dates from the foundation of the Royal Veterinary College in 1791. Before that time the treatment of diseased animals was almost entirely in the hands of ignorant persons, who had scarcely any knowledge of anatomy, physiology, chemistry or pathology. At that date there was practically no scientific literature on animal diseases in the English language.

To enable the public to distinguish between the qualified and the unqualified veterinary practitioners, the Veterinary Surgeons Act was passed in 1881. This Act and the amending Act, passed in 1900, make it an offence for anyone who has not obtained the diploma of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to call himself a



veterinary surgeon, or to use any title stating that he is specially qualified to practise the veterinary art.

It is important to note that under the

it is not made too easy. The Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons is under no temptation to make the prescribed period of study short or the examinations

easy, as such action would tend to overcrowding of the profession, but, at the same time, it is recognised that the country must be provided with a reasonable number of qualified veterinary surgeons.

During the several visits I made to the College the predominant fact brought home to me was the tenderness shown in the handling of the patients and the care taken, during minor and major operations,

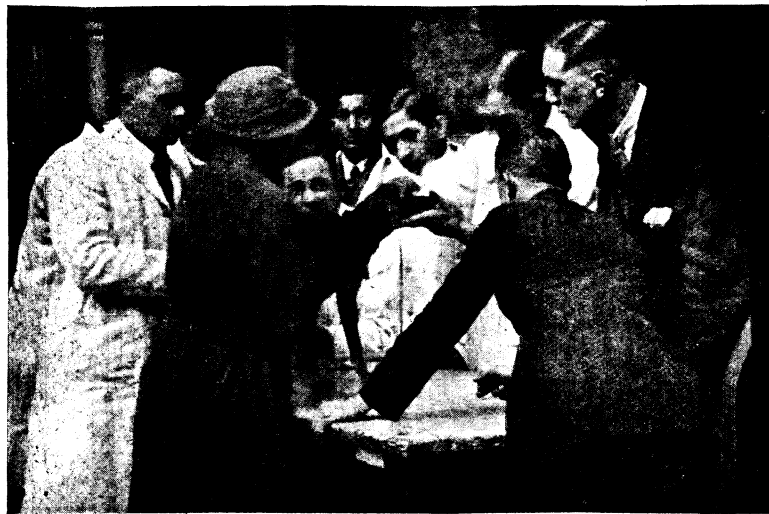
existing state of the law in this country none of the universities has the power to grant a degree or diploma in veterinary medicine or surgery. The existing schools have the sole right to teach those who wish to enter the veterinary profession, as they are severally affiliated to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and that body can admit to its examination only students who have attended prescribed courses of study at the schools.

No one can qualify as a veterinary practitioner otherwise than by conforming to the plan of study prescribed by the College and passing the examinations conducted by its board.

Since admission to the veterinary profession is regulated by the profession itself,

that no unnecessary pain should be caused, the use of anæsthetics being general.

From the public's point of view the out-patients' clinic, to which only animals



AN INTERESTING CASE.



A VALUABLE DALMATIAN BEING ATTENDED TO IN ONE OF THE OPERATING ROOMS.

belonging to poor people are admitted, and in which close upon ten thousand cases a year are treated, is the most interesting.

In the morning at ten o'clock a wonderful assortment of dogs, cats, and small animals are brought by their owners. Each animal is brought, in turn, up to the receiving table, and is there critically examined by a professor, assisted by students in their final year of study, medicine is supplied, minor operations are performed, and the animal is returned to its owner.

It requires a great amount of skill and an infinite amount of patience to handle strange and probably snappy dogs or scratching cats who strongly resent a stranger examining them. In handling dogs a temporary muzzle of tape can be used, but with cats the overhauling often results in a nasty scratch.



AN OPERATION ON A HORSE, UNDER CHLOROFORM, THE SURGEON'S WORK BEING CLOSELY WATCHED BY STUDENTS.

As each animal is finished with, the professor, and any student who has handled it, washes his hands in disinfectant, a precaution against spreading disease. There is many a pathetic scene as owners—more especially women, though I saw one man with tears in his eyes—watch and wait for



A HORSE ABOUT TO BE THROWN ON A THICK BED OF STRAW FOR OPERATION.

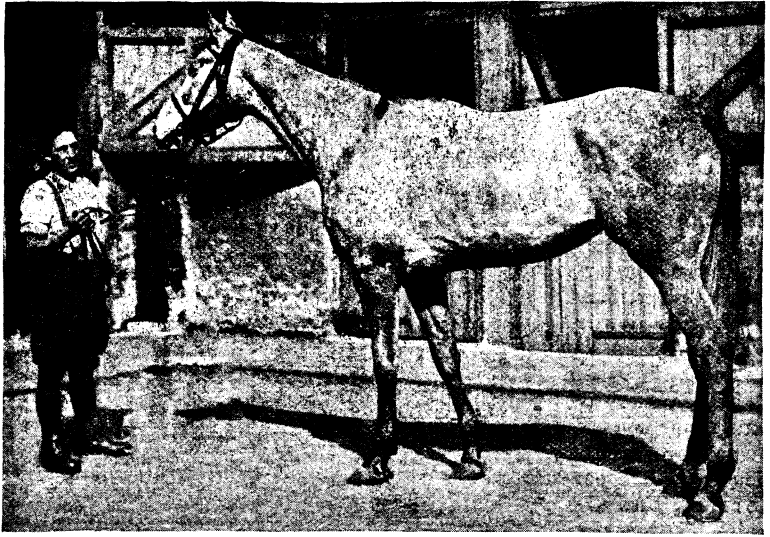
the verdict on the likelihood of the recovery of their beloved pets. On one occasion I saw a puppy of some six weeks handed up and heard the professor's instant remark, "He has broken his leg," and the woman gave a cry of dismay. But in a short time she was walking away with the puppy, whose leg was "set" in splints and banded. The owners sit on one side of the large glass-covered building

where the examinations take place, while near by are small operating rooms to which the animals are taken when necessary. In the afternoons the out-patients' clinic is open for horses, and the same critical care is shown in their examination. Quite a common trouble, it seemed to me, with horses arises from their teeth, but dental operations on so large an animal generally

necessitate its being thrown upon a bed of straw and chloroformed; even the filing of an overgrown molar is a hefty matter requiring both skill and strength.

Before dealing with the hospital and its in-patients, it is well to call attention to a branch of the work at the College little known, but of the greatest value to buyers of horses, whether the animal is the property

of a coster or of a company. I refer to examinations as to soundness. A horse may be thoroughly tested in every possible way, medically, physically, and as a worker, and a certificate given by one of the professors. Many a man would have escaped police court proceedings had he availed himself of this boon before paying for his horse, and, on the other hand, an owner wishing to sell would often be sure of a higher price if he could show such a certificate to a



A VALUABLE THOROUGHBRED PATIENT FULLY RECOVERED.



A HORSE UPON WHICH AN IMPORTANT OPERATION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMED, BEING EXERCISED BY HARRY DILLON, WHO HAS A RECORD OF NEARLY FORTY YEARS AS ATTENDANT AT THE COLLEGE.

possible buyer. Each year about 250 horses are examined as to soundness, but prudence suggests that this number might well be substantially increased.

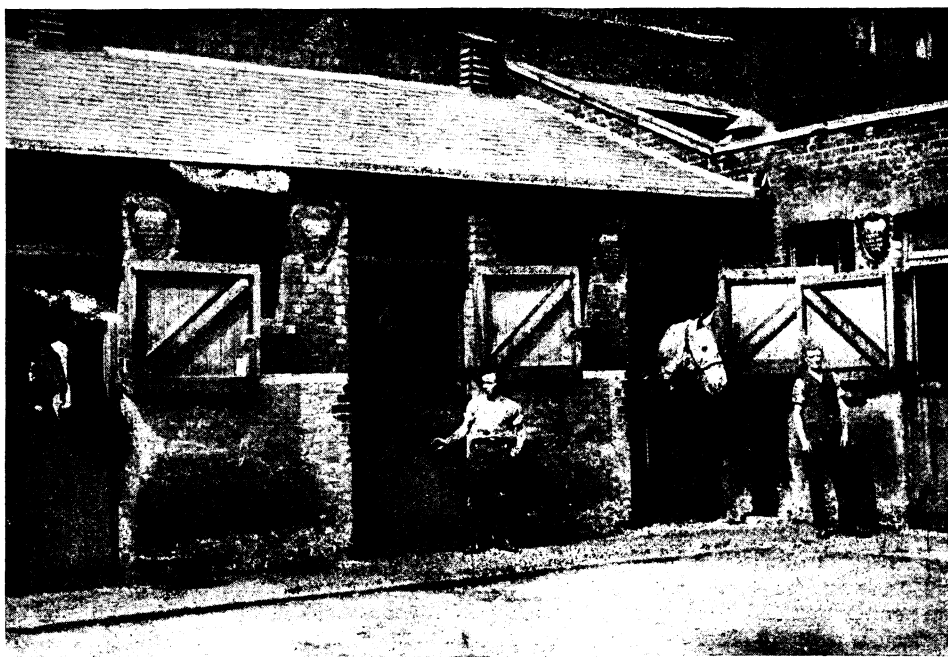
In the hospital itself skilful operations and medical care are daily resulting in the return to perfect health of animals, large and small. On one occasion I saw a beautiful racehorse operated upon for nose trouble—a large hole had to be cut and this was washed out daily for weeks.

I had the pleasure of seeing this same animal leave the College perfectly sound and without a trace of the wound, and was told it would resume its racing career in the autumn. Veterinary surgeons, late students of the College and now in practice, bring their most puzzling



A COSTER'S PONY WHICH, HAVING RECEIVED THE SAME CARE AS ANY THOROUGH-BRED, IS NOW WELL AND READY TO RETURN TO ITS OWNER.

“cases” to the College, and I witnessed a successful operation on a champion dog who had stood reserve for all England at one of the principal shows, which was brought in by a “vet.” Roomy stables are available for the coster's pony or the rich man's racer; the dog wards house the



A CORNER OF THE HORSES' "WARD."

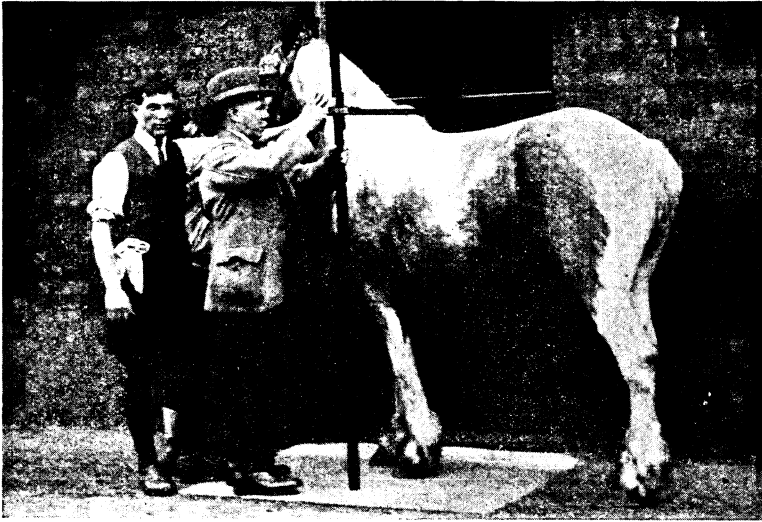
poor child's pet mongrel and my lady's pampered Pekinese; rabbits and guinea-pigs, cows, sheep, goats, and all "in hospital" as "cases" being treated and

that "Bob" had failed to purchase his full quota of possible meals by at least eight. The dog was sent out completely cured of his "indigestion." I hope his owner's desire to parade his dog's financial jugglery was also cured.

To make practical work increasingly effective, there must ever be continued research work, and this branch is under the direction of Sir John McFadyean, M.B., B.Sc., LL.D., M.R.C.V.S., Principal and Dean of the College. On May 23rd, 1924, the Duke of Connaught laid the foundation stone of a new research institute in connection with,

and as part of, the College, and His Royal Highness opened the completed building on 14th July last.

Before a student can begin his course of

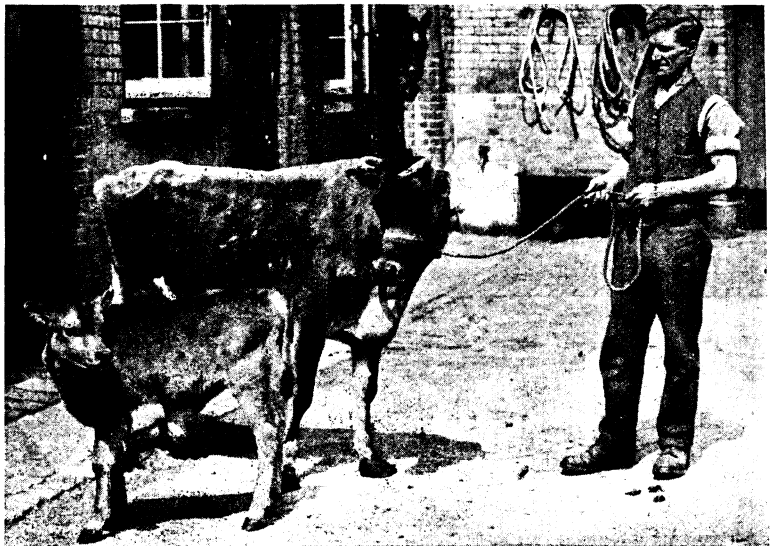


MEASURING A HORSE THAT HAS BEEN SENT IN FOR EXAMINATION AS TO FITNESS.

studied, have their own departments. A large and up-to-date forge in charge of experts is ever busy, a proof of the efficacy of the shoeing work being the daily visits of horses belonging to the Metropolitan Mounted Police.

Of the many curious "finds" that have resulted from operations on animals, probably one of the most extraordinary, and one which had its humorous side, was a dog named "Bob" who was brought in one day evidently in great pain. A prompt operation was decided upon, and from out of that part of his anatomy which Nature had intended for food were extracted

seven pennies and one halfpenny! "Bob" had been taught to catch pennies in his mouth and then run and buy cakes for himself. Here was indisputable evidence..



"MOTHER AND CHILD DOING WELL."

study he must have passed a preliminary examination in general knowledge. No one can be admitted to the College under the age of sixteen. In September of each

year a "Clement Stephenson Entrance Scholarship," value £80 per annum and tenable for four successive years, is awarded on the result of a special competitive examination.

For the students' use, besides the ordinary classrooms, are a natural history museum and a splendid veterinary library.

All students on entry become members of the Royal Veterinary College Medical Association, which has for its object the diffusion of knowledge among its members by the reading of essays and by the holding of debates on veterinary medicine and surgery and all branches of science connected therewith.

The educational fee of one hundred guineas, which covers attendance on the four years course of instruction, may be paid in four instalments of twenty-five guineas each.

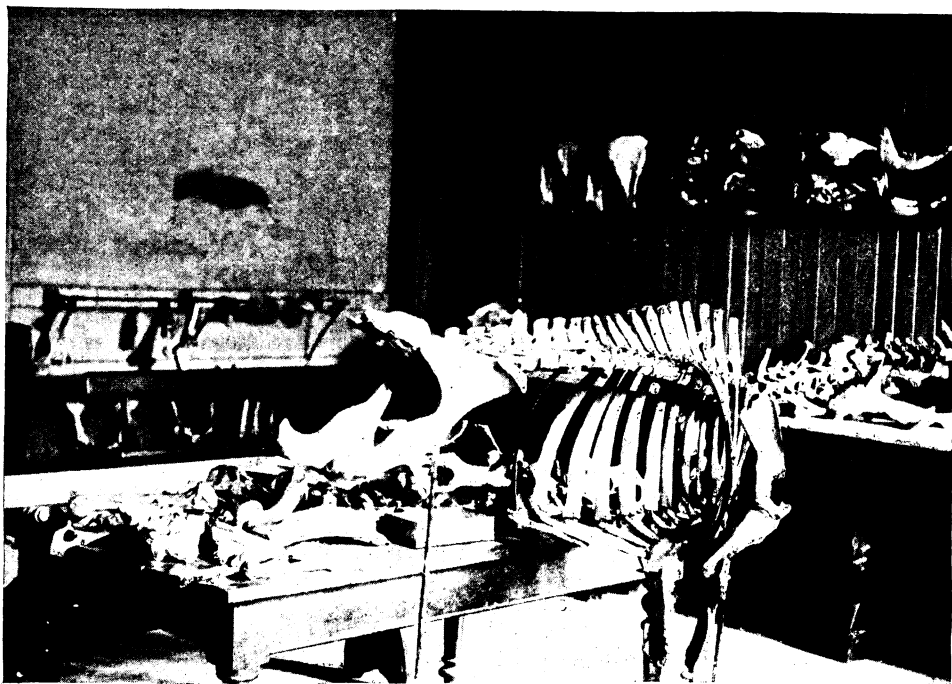
In order to qualify for the first or "A" Examination, a student must study the



SHEEP ADMITTED FOR SPECIAL OBSERVATION.

prescribed subjects for one full session, after having passed the examination in general knowledge. The subjects of this examination are:

- (1) Anatomy of Domesticated Animals:—Bones, Ligaments, Joints.
- (2) Biology:—Elementary Zoology and Botany.
- (3) Chemistry and Physics.



CORNER OF THE STUDENTS' ANATOMICAL MUSEUM.

The subjects for the "B" Examination are:

(1) Anatomy of the Domesticated Animals.

(2) Histology and Physiology.

(3) Stable Management and Manipulation of Domesticated Animals, and Principles of Shoeing Healthy Animals.

The subjects of "C" Examination are:

(1) Pathology, Bacteriology, and Protozoology.

(2) Materia Medica and Toxicology (Oral to include a practical examination in Pharmacy).

(3) Veterinary Hygiene and Dietetics.



A PERSIAN CAT RECEIVING ATTENTION.

In order to qualify for the fourth or "D" Examination, a student must study the prescribed subjects during one full session after passing the "C" Examination. He may present himself for the fourth or "D" Examination before he is twenty-one years of age, but if successful he will not be entitled to receive his diploma or have his name entered in the register of veterinary surgeons until his twenty-first birthday. The subjects of this examination are:

(1) Principles and Practice of Veterinary Medicine; Meat Inspection.

(2) Principles and Practice of Veterinary Surgery and Obstetrics.

The examinations are held at two dates in the year, viz., in July and in December.

Of intense importance to the general public

is the special tuition given in meat inspection, for the purpose of detecting the substitution of horseflesh for beef, goat for sheep, cat for rabbit; discovering diseased conditions caused by animal parasites, and the presence of poisonous substances in the flesh.

Practical instruction on meat inspection is also given at the slaughter-house of the Metropolitan Cattle Market to students preparing for the final examination. The instruction comprises exercises in the methods of meat inspection and in the recognition of healthy and diseased carcasses and organs.

Veterinary Research Scholarships of the value of £200 per annum have been established in order to train promising students, under suitable supervision, with a view to their contributing to the development of veterinary science by becoming either teachers or investigators. These scholarships are open to students who have passed their final examination.

A tribute to the efficacy of the work done by the professors at the College is the high percentage of

successes gained by the students in their annual examinations. Recent figures are 129 out of 145, or 89 per cent.

As with hospitals for human beings, so with this one for animals, its doors are ever open to receive urgent cases, and the resident staff are prepared at any time of the day or night to use their skill and knowledge in the common battle against disease and death.

Unfortunately there is another parallel between the Royal Veterinary College and those other great hospitals, namely, lack of funds. A report before me concludes a statement of a year's splendid work, ungrudgingly performed by all concerned, with these words:—

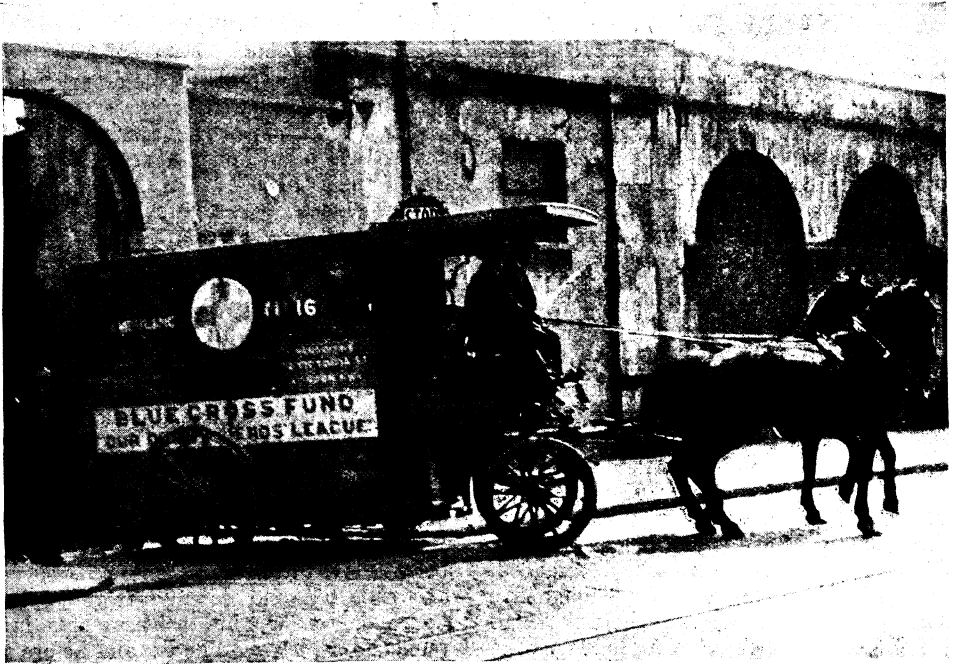
"The work has been hampered by lack of laboratory accommodation and incomplete



staff owing to the inadequacy of the salaries."

There are few people who do not possess an animal of some sort, and, possessing, have not at some time or other had to seek the advice of "a vet." Were it not for the Royal Veterinary College, the highly-prized

skill of that local animal doctor would not be available, a fact which in itself gives an unique interest to the important work which the Royal Veterinary College is carrying on with specialised skill and active research at this establishment in Camden Town.



AN AMBULANCE TAKING HOME A PATIENT "FIT FOR ANY WORK."

## THE CALL OF THE YEAR.

**I** WILL not mourn too long  
 For purple-budded trees of primrosed Spring,  
 For elm-hung Summer lanes, the chuckling song  
 Of rivulets, the screaming swift's wild wing,  
 For Autumn's rich extravagance of gold,  
 Amber and emerald and carnelian,  
 Nor for the trees' bare tracery on the cold  
 December skies that sleep, snow-heavy and wan.

For me, above the streets  
 There still shall soar some budded boughs of Spring,  
 And where the unresting traffic ever beats  
 Haply I still may hear a blackbird sing,  
 Or the slow call of rooks at even; but when  
 The shrivelled leaves lie whispering on the grass  
 I'll smell some pungent garden fire, and then  
 Bid Memory, murmuring of the country, pass!

DOROTHY ROGERS.



# GRIMY

By PHILIP G. CHADWICK

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

THE first-storey window from which Grimy peered looked over a broad back garden full of flower-beds and bushes, and capable of hiding the whole borough police force from his straining eyes. Except for the wind, there was no sound, nor was there any sign of movement, but Grimy knew he was caught. Unless he did something exceptionally bold and clever, this would be his last burglary for a long while to come.

"Swelp me!" he muttered, wondering how many there were and where they were hidden—only two or three, most likely. He fingered his tightly-packed haversack lingeringly, patted his bulging pockets. The haul of a lifetime and not even a chance to hide it before he went to gaol!

In front of him was the balcony up the left-hand pillar of which he had ascended. No use in sliding down that. Though five seconds would find him at the bottom, those five seconds would be sufficient for the police to see him and close in, and as he touched the earth he would be pinioned from behind and it would be "Good-bye, Grimy!" And to descend through the house was just as useless.

"Swelp me!" he said again.

But he was not Grimy for nothing. Grimy was short for Grimalkin, and Grimalkin, so the swell crook who had nicknamed him had once explained, meant a very cute cat. It was an unforgettable compliment, an unfailing inspiration in moments like these.

For the third time he gave vent to his invariable exclamation of disgust, and, having thereby cleared his thoughts, stepped out on to the balcony and, in full view of all who might be watching, swung himself over the rail. He felt very heavy with the weight of his treasured winnings, but he could not help that. There was always risk in life, and if this were a bigger risk, then it *was* a bigger risk, and there was nothing more to be said about it.

Standing on the very outer edge of the balcony, with one hand gripping the rail, he

raised his voice from its customary hoarse monotone and shouted.

"Say, you cops," he bawled, "yer've got me! I'll climb down if yer won't 'urt me. Swelp me, I will!"

Instantaneously a figure appeared from the shadows below and answered. "Come on, then!" it called with stern authority.

"Yer won't treat me rough?" whined Grimy, leaning outwards and scanning the nearer ground keenly.

"Not us. You're safe as houses if you'll come quietly," answered the other, and was joined by a companion at the foot of the balcony.

Then 'ere goes, thought Grimy, and crouched down. Perhaps he would break his legs or his head. Perhaps he wouldn't. It was a cat chance. His trained, lissom body released itself like a compressed spring and shot out and down over the waiting police on to the piled softness of a large round flower-bed. As he lit, and before the jar shook him, he jumped again, and again. Then he went rolling.

His loaded haversack, fastened closely to his back though it was, gave him a complex, many-pointed buffet between the shoulders; a silver candlestick dug him violently in the side. There were sharp pains innumerable, but such little things did not matter. Nothing snapped. In a second he was on his feet, and in the next second a light flashed blindingly in his eyes, and "Hul-lo!" exclaimed the constable behind it.

"Swelp me!" said Grimy, and sent the lamp flying with a kick worthy of a ballet dancer. Then he was away, following the great chance his agility gave to him.

Where no police could follow, except circuitously, he could go direct and with ease—over the ten-foot garden wall with a flying leap, one swing, and a risky drop on the far side, across the road and over the opposing paling, then through two more gardens, up a short drain pipe leading from a water-butt to the roof of a wash-house, down the far side with barked knuckles and



"His trained, lissom body released itself like a compressed spring and shot out and down over the waiting police."

ripping trouser knees, and so on almost in a bee-line to a place which seemed safe, scaling every wall available, putting all possible obstacles between himself and the pursuit.

It was a dark, narrow road in which he finally paused. Gulping for breath, scratched and bruised all over, he smiled happily to himself. He wasn't Grimy for nothing.

Adjusting the varied goods in his pockets to greater ease, and realising, with a twinge of disappointment, that he had lost more than one valuable *en route*, he looked around for his bearings. No one could be certain of the direction in which he had fled, so no one could follow. He judged himself safe here.

But luck was against him. Before he had even begun to locate himself, an unexpected side lane was revealed by the sudden appearance of the one person he did not expect—another policeman. They came face to face.

There was no delusion in Grimy's mind that he could pass himself off as an ordinary, respectable citizen; he knew his whole appearance to be against him. His clothes

were torn, his hands bleeding, his face dirty and sweating. Even at his very best he knew from experience that the police always regarded him with suspicion. There was something in his face.

So, after the slightest pause of mutual regard in the half-light of a gas-lamp across the road, Grimy turned and bolted. Tired, too tired for the moment to continue his acrobatic flight, at least he could run, and that would be good enough to evade one heavily-built constable. He ran. A whistle blew; running footsteps sounded behind; he began to look round for other startled police. He turned a corner, and the following footsteps dwindled.

He was in a district where gardens had given place to small houses flush with the roadside, and, planning new evasions, was just coming to the conclusion that hiding would be safer than mere flight, when he had his first stroke of luck.

Quite suddenly, on entering a cross-road, he found he was no longer alone. There were any number of people, men and women and boys, and a few shouting, giggling girls, and they were all running, as he was, pelting in one direction as though

they, too, fled from danger. Startled, he nearly turned back, but his quick wits told him to run on, told him that this hurrying crowd was to be his salvation. Bicycles whirled by, a motor dashed past. A child fell and someone kicked it, and there was a momentary pause and eddy in the stream.

"What is it?" panted Grimy to a man near him, knowing what it must be even as he asked.

"It's Harriman's Stores," the man gasped back. "Some blaze it'll be—some blaze!"

"Some blaze!" he gulped more breathlessly as Grimy passed him and sought the less congested causeway. He paused in an entry to wipe his bloodstained hands and dust his clothes a little, then returned to the road.

This fire and this crowd were real luck; in the crush and flurry he would be as safe as though he were miles away. For a while, he decided, he would watch the flaming building, and when he felt rested and his mind was eased by the refreshing, impersonal excitement of it all, he would disappear quietly, happy in the knowledge that he had escaped the tightest corner and brought off the biggest haul of his career.

He hurried with the crowd.

Harriman's Stores, on the many floors of which every variety of goods, from toys to clothing and furniture, was sold, extended the half of a main street, a high mass of windows interspersed by ornamental copings and topped by a short tower. It loomed above the neighbouring buildings massively, and as Grimy approached it from the rear, the reflections of its burning shone dancingly on the broad shop windows of the locality and glowed redly on the low clouds above.

Grimy found himself separated from his more familiar neighbours and struggling in a closer, even more intent mass of people along a narrow side-street. This greater crowd was not running, because there was no room in which to run, but in its own bustling, though gradual, way it was progressing towards something, apparently towards the façade of the building, which, no doubt, Grimy thought, presented the best spectacle, also the most security. He went with them.

The ground floor of the store was flaming throughout. Like a vast brazier its interior glowed with intense heat, and here and there flames gushed menacingly from broken windows. Above, the great pile loomed black and silent, oblivious, as it were, of

the insensate chaos below. Even as Grimy watched, the fourth and fifth storey windows began to light up and grow brighter.

"The longer it burns, the better for me," he thought, pushing his way along. The heat in the side-street was intolerable, and it was emptying rapidly. Ahead, in the main road, some sort of struggle was going on, apparently police driving the crowd back.

"They've got their hands full," he chuckled, and found himself next to one without the slightest tremor. Pushing back with the rest, he felt so cheerful that he made a joking remark to the policeman, who did not answer. Then he became engaged in conversation with a loud man, very anxious to explain the absence of the borough fire-engine and the respective distances which other fire-engines had to travel.

The man moved on, and some new rumour spread through the crowd, passing from one to another like a breath. Excitement suddenly became semi-panic; there were loud cries, and a woman near Grimy burst into tears.

The mass surged forward. A great, brawny man, in an effort to get out, swung round violently and sent Grimy sprawling almost at the feet of a little clump of police. He clanked as he hit the roadway, and his many bruises throbbed anew, drawing a sharp cry from him. For a moment he thought only of his own danger, and then his ears caught the conversation of the men above, and he forgot his own self in sudden, horrified interest.

"It's the caretaker's," a sergeant was saying. "Him and his wife went out for about twenty minutes, and left the kid up there. An' when they got back it was like this; every stairway's impassable."

"Can't we reach it somehow?"

"Reach it? Up there? Look at it, man. The kid's on the very top floor. There isn't a ladder in the town that length."

Grimy sat up, staring, his mind suddenly alive to troubles he had never previously dreamed of. "D'yer mean there's a bairn up there?" he gasped, struggling heavily to his feet.

One constable glanced down at him and nodded curtly.

"A kid!" whispered Grimy. "It'll burn to death!" He stared fascinatedly up the great façade. If it had been a man, it would have been different. But a baby! The little beggar couldn't help itself.

He remembered how once he had discovered one in a big lacy cot in a great house

he had entered. His lamp flashing on its face had woken it, and instead of screaming it had held out pudgy hands to him and gurgled in ridiculous greeting. It was a nice, chubby baby, and he had not taken its solid silver rattle, but had placed it in one of those questioning hands and tip-toed away. He thought of that now.

"Are yer sure there isn't a way up?" he asked hoarsely, and found himself speaking to the Chief Constable.

"Yes," snapped the Chief, turning strained eyes on him unseeingly.

"Well, look 'ere——" said Grimy, and ceased, incredulous of his mad idea. A great, grey gate, spike-topped, loomed in his mind, a gate between high, grim walls; he thought of his crammed haversack and of the wealth and freedom it meant to him. Yet—a baby! Of all that struggling crowd he was the only one who could help. The only one!

He did not balance one thought with another. He stared at them mentally in amazed impartiality, and made his decision because the words that sprang unasked from his lips left his simple mind no alternative to action.

"Look 'ere," he repeated, his voice hoarse with emotion, "I can get up there." His hand caught the Chief's arm and shook it roughly.

He found himself the centre of all eyes, incredulous, stern policemen's eyes, and a half panic seized him for fear that they might arrest him or otherwise hinder him in his purpose.

"Which winder is it? Swelp me, yer stands there! I tell yer I can do it!" His voice rose.

"Don't be a fool, young man," said the Chief harshly. "If you want to know, it's the very top window—under the third arch. Have a look at it. It's impossible!"

Grimy's keen eyes swept over the façade, upwards and downwards from the window he intended to reach. Deadly danger, unknown risks, strange circumstances, he summed them all up in one swift survey. Straight as a die to within a foot of that distant window ran a fall-pipe. It must be hot, red hot, at the bottom, but that was the way up, and it was the way he must go. If he could reach it on a level with the first storey, it might be cooler.

"Take care o' these," he snarled, and began to unload his pockets at the feet of the astounded Chief Constable.

Silver and gold and jewels rang and tinkled on the roadway, glowing brightly in

the vivid, dancing light. His haversack he emptied with one jerk, then re-slung it over his shoulders.

The police gaped at him, at his ugly little face, at his light climbing shoes.

"Blowed if it isn't a burglar!" said one, and "You can't get up there, you fool!" cried another.

Grimy was not listening. He trotted forward, gave a quick double hop, and sprang for the porch.

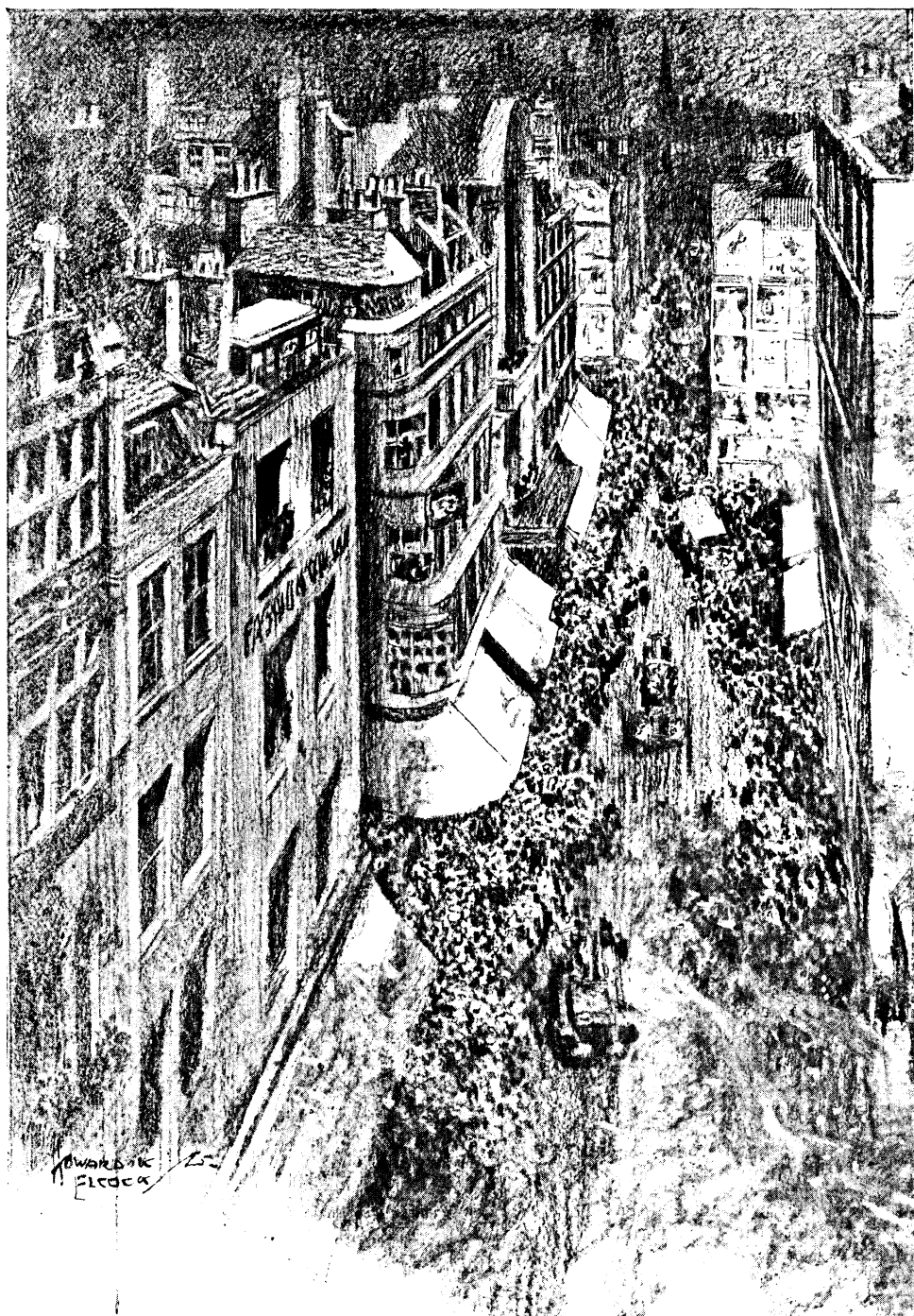
The heat! The heat! It struck him like a solid flame, stung into his fingers as they gripped the stonework, blistered his feet as he swung on to the porch top. The smell of burnt rubber came to him, his head throbbed with the sudden, terrific change of temperature. But he did not pause. If he were to get through this lower belt of heat, he must not hesitate, or his hands would char, and he would not be Grimy at all.

As he swarmed up the deep relief work of the stone ornamentation above the porch, the roar of the fire behind the wall dimmed in his ears, deadened beneath a noise which sounded as though the whole world were cheering. It rose and increased and died suddenly, died into absolute silence as, with one hand gripping a window-sill, he swung leftwards to the fall-pipe.

It was hot, but not unbearably so. And he was at home on it, as at home as a fly on a ceiling. Looking neither up nor down, he commenced his ascent, moving upwards from joint to joint slowly and surely, relaxing his muscles a moment at each, tightening them in between. His mind was attuned to a peculiar intent blankness, for any thought during climbing was likely to lead to disaster, so he did not dwell, for encouragement's sake, on the object of his climb, nor steel himself for the greater effort it required. Ease of mind, automatic attention to detail, these were his safeguards.

Vaguely he realised that to the crowd below it must appear the most incredible performance, but the heroic side of his feat did not occur to him; he was accustomed to his steel-like muscles and unerring judgment. They were the most satisfactory commonplace of life.

Passing a row of lighted windows, he knew it to be the third storey. It was cool up here; there was an upward draught which almost chilled. His cut, singed hands ached violently, his feet were blistered and excruciatingly sore, yet he disregarded



them. He was bound to disregard them. He acted automatically with exactly the right strain and the right easement at exactly the right moment.

His muscles throbbing with a pain he refused to recognise, he worked gradually up the slender fall-pipe. Another storey was

passed, brilliantly alight and roaring through a split pane, then another along which only dim reflections showed. The



"He tested the sill. It was one of the nasty kind, having a slight slope outwards."

next, he judged, would be safe for him to enter, for there was no need to prolong the ascent further than necessary. In fact, to shorten his climb was becoming vital, as his fingers were growing clumsily numb, and before he achieved safety there was one particular difficulty to surmount which would demand the perfect working of every nerve.

When he reached the next window he found it unaccountably barred.

"Swelp me!" he muttered, and, with the science born of long training, eased his muscles for a further effort.



It was only a short length compared with the distance he had come, but his brain seemed to have grown weary, and he could scarcely compel his stiffened fingers to do their work. For him, he had suffered too many conflicting emotions that night, and the hard monotony of this straight climb was telling on him.

Yet nothing went wrong. Soon his objective gleamed dimly above him, drew level; he turned his attention with actual pleasure to the tricky problem of reaching the window-sill.

He knew the way to do it well enough—had often done similar feats before. The great height made no difference—only certain, instead of probable, death if he fell, and he was thinking of neither death nor falling. But he had to be careful.

Leaving loose with one hand and holding grimly with the other and with his feet and knees, he tested the sill. It was one of the nasty kind, having a slight slope outwards, but at least it was made of concrete, and its roughened surface provided a frictional grip.

He left go with the other hand, swung it over his head with a peculiar swooping motion, and dropped it on the sill neatly and with braced fingers. For a moment his body bridged the gap between window and pipe, then his feet slid easily along the surface of the wall and he hung. A second's breathing space, and with perfectly balanced body he heaved upwards on to the narrow ledge. Good!

Faint lights flickered through the glass as he peered in, and there was a strong smell of smoke. The window was partially open. Good, again!

In five seconds he was in the room, and in another two was waving his hand to the unheard and unseen crowds below. He could not hear because of the roar of the furnace beneath him, and his eyes seemed all bleary and queer, so that he saw nothing but flying shadows and lights and the black roof of the night.

Then he did the most unaccountable act of his career. He withdrew his head, sat down on the floor, and cried. Pain and weariness smote him, pain and weariness of mind and body he had never experienced, and there was a strong and very human regret over the pile of jewels and silverware he had left in the road so far below.

"Swelp me!" he muttered, and wiped his eyes with filthy hands. "That baby!"

There was something plausibly idiotic in

the idea that a grown man of his capabilities should throw away his freedom and risk his life for a mere yelling bundle of pink flesh and undeveloped brain. For it *was* yelling. Jetting through the furnace roar its puny voice made itself heard, drawing Grimy to the side of its cot, which he discerned dimly across the room.

"That's enough!" he said brutally, and, as it continued, smacked it none too gently on the side of the head, under the impression that babies were bad when they cried, and required smacking. "Swelp me, yer little brat!" he said. "Shut yer row!"

The baby howled louder, and Grimy, abandoning it with a shrug, stared round the room in search of the door. Heavens, how his muscles throbbed!

His thought, though not his hope, was that there might be a better way of return than down the fall-pipe, and with this idea in mind he left the room and began a brief exploration of that portion of the flame-lit building. There was also a brilliant idea in his mind which had no connection whatever with the baby.

He descended to the next floor, where the flames were already spreading. Within five minutes he returned satisfied. There was no other way out: he must escape down the face of the building or perish. He slammed the door, crossed to the cot, and cursed the baby roundly.

Smoke was oozing into the room; the tang of its smell made him choke. The baby was howling as, perhaps, no other baby ever howled before. Unhitching his haversack, he jerked the child up and tucked it inside. Considerately he adjusted its little limbs to some semblance of comfort, left its head sticking out at one side, and buckled the opposing strap. He was ready for the descent, and it had to be made quickly.

Until the moment he re-slung the haversack on his shoulders he had never taken the remotest interest in the weight of babies. But—swelp me, and swelp me again—this was a heavy one.

Though there was nothing else to be done but carry it down the fall-pipe, he was not at all sure that he could do it. Its howling would distract him intolerably, and concentration on his climbing was the whole secret of his powers. Did it injure a baby to stun it? He supposed it must—very probably kill it. He didn't ought to 've come! Yet—that brilliant idea occurred to him again—perhaps he was wrong. It depended.

Leaning out of the window, he perceived

what looked like a large handkerchief spread out on the road below, and guessing it to be a blanket, held up in expectation of his having to jump or drop the baby, cursed the originators of the thought as unobservant fools. Climbing was his forte, not bomb dropping.

"Come on!" he muttered, stood out on the sill, and commenced his descent.

Hanging outwards from one hand, he reached for the pipe, clutched it and swung sideways. His other hand followed, his rubber shoes gripped, and he slid for two yards and smashed a finger on the pipe jointing. His breath jerked out with a heavy grunt. Was there *no* luck for him on this abominable night?

Difficult as the descent inevitably was, it now became worse. His chafed hands were too sore for anything but forgetting—they felt pulpy and insecure—and this finger was the very devil. He had to hold his mind dourly to a task which was usually entirely automatic.

Yet after a few seconds he found that, despite a pain which stung as though the very fire itself were biting him, and a constant howling in his ears, going down was easier than going up. The smoke was all about him, and below, he realised, flames were waiting and dancing for him, but hope sprang anew as he discovered that his task was less difficult than he had feared. Perhaps, when he drew near enough, those fools with the blanket might be useful, though how he was to know whereabouts they were he could not tell. He would have risked the baby that way from a reasonable height, but he could not unloosen the tightly-slung haversack. No, they must both descend together through the flames.

He passed into firelit dimness; smoke engulfed him, choked him, and after a while the baby ceased crying suddenly with a little pathetic kind of gulp. He no longer knew how far down the building he was; all he knew was that he must cling tightly, forget the devils which seemed to bite and rend at his body, and go down hand by hand, inch by inch, into darkness. Below the darkness a pit of flaming light waited for him.

His mind swayed vaguely from point to point; he became uncertain whether he was moving at all or merely clinging blindly. Perhaps he was climbing up again! There was no up or down, only a great swirling movement of colour and black depths. And what were those voices, tiny voices, whimpering in his ears? The baby? No,

the baby could not say, "Hang on—hang on another second!"

Strong arms gripped him and tried to drag him away from the fall-pipe, but he resisted, dug his fingers into the tiny crack between it and the wall, and the voices changed suddenly.

"Leave go, you fool!" a clearer voice shouted, but he didn't. It was all one to him what they ordered: his mind was still clear enough not to be tempted by its own wanderings.

Then something iron-like and horrible hit him on his bleeding knuckles and he seemed to fall headlong to greater safety and clearer understanding. He was descending rapidly, and bright helmets shone in his eyes, and he knew that the man in the crowd must have been wrong about the fire-escapes, because one was here and had come to his rescue. He hoped very deeply that the baby was not smothered, little fool though it was!

His mind became clear again as he touched ground. Supported by two firemen, with a third unfastening the haversack, he stood swaying sickly, staring in mild surprise at the circle of police which ringed him in. They were struggling with a yelling and enthusiastic crowd, admiringly but foolishly anxious to honour Grimy in its own boisterous fashion.

He realised that the police were protecting him, protecting Grimy, the really cute cat! A pang of doubt shot through his keen appreciation of the position. When it was all over and his moments of triumph were done, would they arrest him? There was, after all, no connection in the mind of the law between rescuing a baby and burgling a house: one did not excuse the other. His doubt became a certainty.

Within five minutes all such thoughts were driven from his mind. A joyfully weeping woman claimed the baby, a taxi crawled into view through the press. Escorted by police and firemen, he was hurried into the car, the door slammed, the Klaxon screamed, and he saw no more of Harriman's Stores except a great glow in the sky that persisted till the morning broke.

They took him to a great hotel, and an hour later he was eating a huge meal, keeping a suspicious eye upon a very fine gentleman who drank champagne and chatted with him.

He had interviewed the caretaker and his wife, and the Chief Constable and the mayor of the borough, a doctor and other



unplaced people, and now, exhausted and harried from this experience, was having his reward spoilt by the kindly attention of this tremendous gentleman.

"Of course, nothing will be said about *that*," said the gentleman. "You need not fear." It was his house which Grimy had burgled.

"Yer 'aven't got all the stuff back," said Grimy with hoarse nervousness, fumbling knife and fork in his thickly-bandaged hands. "I spread some on it about as I were running."

"It will turn up," said the other, and beamed. "Now, look here, my man, a fellow who can do what you have done to-night is worthy of a far better life than the one you have been leading. We have agreed between us, the mayor and myself, that we will find you real work, and if any of your—er—past acts should come to light, you can trust us to do our best for you, our very best. You would like steady work, eh?"

Grimy nodded with a shudder in his soul.

"There's ten pounds here," continued the gentleman. "I want you to buy some decent clothes to-day and any other things you may need. No, don't thank me." He held up a soft, slim hand. "We all feel alike. The whole town will wish to fête you and reward you."

Grimy swallowed the last of his meal with

a gulp, wondered whether to sop up the gravy with another slice of bread, and didn't. "Thanks, mister," he jerked out clumsily, rose, and hesitated over life-changing decisions.

Fè.ing! That meant fuss and flather and a regular to-do. And real steady work? He wiped his mouth on one bandaged hand. Dark nights and the dimmed flash of jewels, excitement, danger! And climbing! Beyond all, climbing! Must he change his steady nerves for a steady job? Swelp me!

"Back in a mo'," he mumbled, and shuffled from the room. He heard the kind gentleman lighting another cigar as he passed out. The hotel was quiet and empty with early morning hush.

Through a darkened room and a window he made his way to the yard, where he paused for a moment ruminating. He had had a swell feed, and in his pocket were ten crackly buckshee notes. Nor had he neglected the tip which those barred windows had given him. It had been a brilliant idea. Though he had spent but five minutes on the work, he had ransacked Harriman's jewellery department to a tune that comforted the sorest soul.

Closing the window quietly, he crossed the yard and with easy grace vaulted on to the low wall. He wasn't Grimy for nothing!



## MEAN WHILE.

**T**HE years drift on to their fold,  
They drift like a flock of sheep,  
And little a man may hold  
Before the hour of his sleep.

Then give, while my day is here,  
Your beauty into my day,  
That I pass, when my hour draws near,  
Not untriumphant away.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



"'I can't leave here, my lad. This is the only stall that's doing any trade.' 'You're not doing any now,' Nolly remarked sulkily. 'That's because you've planted yourself in the way.'"

# SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

"**N**OBODY would have believed he was one of them, sir," said the village constable triumphantly. "Just like a gentleman he is to look at. All indignation and swank at first, when I dropped my hand on his arm. But he soon saw it wasn't no good." He looked appraisingly at Nolly. "Just about your stamp he is, sir."

Nolly thanked the constable, and Sir John Brimpton, *alias* Bunk, grinned quietly and hoarded the joke.

"Pretty smart of you to spot him, Hewitt," he remarked.

"Well, I'm not saying it wasn't, sir," said the constable, swelling slightly. "He's wanted on six charges that we knows of down here, and I don't know how many more besides. One of Tupe Barling's gang he is. There's no doubt it was this yere *fête* which brought him here. You'd have missed a few things out of the house while you was all in the grounds. I don't suppose he come alone, but him having been nabbed, it may head the others off. Still, there's no harm in being careful, sir."

It was the morning of the annual *fête*, due to be opened at two in the afternoon. For years it had been the custom to throw open the grounds of Tipton Admiral to such as were able and willing to spend sixpence in aid of the nearest Cottage Hospital. Bunk, when he came into the title and estate, had willingly carried on the tradition. Even now the lawns behind the house were gay with stalls, and on the coarser grass of the park, beyond the belt of rhododendrons, were swing-boats, a roundabout, a mountain slide and a coconut shy.

Hewitt, the sleuth-hound, proud as a terrier which had caught a whole family of rats, was rewarded with a pound note and given into the care of Rutherford, the butler, who was instructed to take him to the pantry and regale him with beer. The two brothers then passed out through the glass doors of the gunroom on to the sunlit terrace.

"That," said Bunk, "shows that we ought to keep our eyes open. We've never had a burglary yet."

"And a daylight one," said Nolly,

"would have been so dull, especially as we probably shouldn't have known anything about it until hours afterwards. I'll tell Rutherford to keep his eyes skinned."

Bunk, making skilful use of his crutches, climbed down a shallow flight of stone steps and swung himself across a path and on to a lawn beyond, closely followed by his younger brother. Many of the helpers at the *fête* were already on the spot. The affair was to be preceded by a luncheon party. Mrs. Leyden, the vicar's lady, who dealt for the nonce in fancy needlework, was laying her wares with all the care of a professional window-dresser or a child playing at keeping shop. Lucille Mason, her secretary, temporary greengrocer, was ready some hours in advance to deal with customers. Mrs. Leyden's daughter Gabrielle was a dispenser of ice-cream, and had nothing whatever to do until business was due to start and the ready-made article arrived in a freezer. The three formed a group which Bunk and Nolly presently joined.

"What did Hewitt want with you?" Gabrielle demanded, feigning an air of deep suspicion.

"It was about Nolly," said Bunk. "Nothing very serious. A mere matter of forgery. We managed to square him."

"Unless my brother is very careful," said Nolly pleasantly, "the next charge against me is going to be fratricide. Gabrielle, my child, if that bangle you're wearing is genuine nine-carat rolled gold, I should take it home and hide it somewhere while the going's good. From what Hewitt tells us, we're surrounded by thieves, bravos, thimble-riggers, company promoters and other social pests. Personally, I shouldn't feel comfortable if I had a gold tooth."

Mrs. Leyden looked up in real concern, but she looked at Bunk, from whom serious information was sometimes forthcoming.

"He's joking, isn't he?" she asked.

Mrs. Leyden was one of those painfully literal ladies who have to be led up to a joke and taken all around it before they can see it. Had she been gifted with a sense of humour she could never have written those tearful stories about pious cripples who were an unconscionable time a-dying—tales which were classified as healthy Sunday literature for the young. Lucille smiled and Gabrielle laughed outright.

"Mother, darling," she said, "you're a sheer joy."

"I'm afraid," said Bunk solemnly, "that there's something in what Nolly has said."

"*Et tu, Brute!*" murmured Lucille.

"To the extent that we've had a narrow shave of being visited by an undesirable, Hewitt happened to recognise him as a member of a gang of crooks who was 'wanted,' and promptly snaffled him. Rather smart of Hewitt, I think. He said the prisoner is very like Nolly. An inexperienced person might possibly have mistaken him for a gentleman."

Nolly turned to the ladies with a gesture of saintly patience.

"Let him go on," he said quietly; "I am not yet at the end of my tether. I can endure two more insults before I foam at the mouth and bite pieces out of the back of his neck."

"But this is serious," murmured Mrs. Leyden.

"Thank you, Mrs. Leyden, thank you!" said Nolly fervently. "At least I have one sympathiser. Hitherto your daughter——"

"I meant, if there really are thieves about here——"

"Oh, since they've caught this one I shouldn't think there's much to worry about," Gabrielle interrupted. "Of course, if you knew he was here and still at large, it would be different."

"But there may be others," murmured Lucille, "especially if he belonged to a gang."

"That's what occurred to me," said Bunk. "We must all keep our eyes open."

The group split up. Nolly and Gabrielle strolled together along the length of the stalls.

"I must try and find time this afternoon," she said, "to have a shot at Bunk's coconuts. Ladies half-way, I believe, and all bad nuts exchanged. I'm rather good at coconuts."

"You'll need to be. Bunk's just been fetching up blisters on his hands through nailing 'em on. You'd better spend your money on the roundabouts. You do get something for your tuppence. Besides, even if you did get a coconut, what would you do with it? I once met a man who swore that he had eaten a piece of one, but he was a notorious liar and nobody believed him."

"And, of course," said Gabrielle, "what you've just told me about Bunk is the literal truth. Nolly, I'm ashamed of you. You let your brother run one of the side-shows, and spend your own time running around and amusing yourself, and slander-ing him."

Nolly stopped to light a cigarette, with which he presently made a fine gesture.

"I shall do my bit," he said. "I shall be here this afternoon to spend money. You forget that I am a leader of fashion in these parts. When it becomes known that Mr. Oliver Brimpton has been on the swings, everybody desirous of being IT will follow suit. Same with roundabouts and coco-nuts. I may even feel compelled to swallow one of your awful ices. In a word, my job is to make the thing go with a whizz and encourage the reluctant to spend their money. If you, my child, can manage to separate yourself at times from your health-destroying hoky-poky, I might stand you a ride or two on the galloping horses."

"We'll see what business is like," said Gabrielle.

## II.

By four o'clock that afternoon the *fête*, which had opened very quietly, was slowly acquiring an air of decorous gaiety. People who had been shy of spending money too soon had begun to open their purses. The roundabout hooted periodically and raved a succession of crazy tunes. Intermittently the stentorian voice of Bunk could be heard, inviting customers to roll, bowl, or pitch. But there was not a great crowd present, and it consisted mostly of such folk who take their pleasures sedately. Not until the evening brought an influx of the labouring classes would the atmosphere of a garden-party give place to the less restrained air of a country fair.

Nolly, smoking a cigarette and wearing a smile which was intended to disguise an air of gentle boredom, bore down on the stall behind which Gabrielle was packing an ice wafer for the elder Miss Sharpe. He waited until the transaction had been completed, and then rested his elbows on the American cloth.

"Strawberry or vanilla?" Gabrielle inquired briskly.

Nolly shook his head.

"My doctor wouldn't hear of it," he said, "especially after the variety of things I've already been compelled to eat. Come along o' me, and let's be sick on the swings."

"You're a disgusting creature," Gabrielle remarked dispassionately. "I'm not sure that I want to be seen about with you. Besides, I hate swings."

"There's the roundabout, then. I believe I could get seriously ill on the roundabout if I stayed on long enough."

Gabrielle shook her head.

"I can't leave here, my lad. This is the only stall that's doing any trade."

"You're not doing any now," Nolly remarked sulkily.

"That's because you've planted yourself in the way."

The young man shrugged his shoulders.

"I've got nobody to play with," he complained. "Everybody I know seems to be selling things, and telling me I'm interrupting business every time I try to talk to them. I've got an awful bad attack of that nobody-loves-me feeling. You might let the hoky-poky look after itself for a bit and come on a tour round with me."

There was nobody very near, and Gabrielle came round from the back of the stall.

"Can't be done, Nolly," she said. "I mustn't lose custom. And, besides, there's the till, and there might be wicked people about."

"I haven't noticed any," grunted Nolly. "I wish there were. It mightn't be so dull."

"Be a good boy, and get me a coconut."

"Bunk's warned me off. He says I'm too good a shot, and he doesn't want to run the show at a loss."

Gabrielle turned around and bent over a flower-bed. She plucked a sprig of a pale green plant which had long since ceased to bloom and, returning to the disgruntled Nolly, slipped it into his buttonhole.

"There's rosemary," she said. "That's for remembrance. Run away and enjoy yourself, like a good little boy, and try to imagine I'm with you."

Nolly shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well," he said. "If you see me gazing deeply into the eyes of some fair stranger and bringing her round here for a strawberry and vanilla mixed, you'll know what you've driven me to."

Gabrielle chuckled. "I should like to see you trying to flirt with somebody, Nolly," she said maliciously. "I have seen a performing elephant try to dance. Oh, look here! Customers!"

A woman with a string of children had arrived and were standing in front of the stall. Gabrielle hastened away to attend to them, and Nolly stared moodily after her. Then he turned, crossed the lawn, and threaded his way down a path through the rhododendrons to the pastures beyond, where the roundabout was groaning a popular melody.

The roundabout had stopped, and was hooting for passengers, who seemed diffident in coming forward; and while Nolly

hesitated a girl in a blue tailor-made suit suddenly detached herself from a small group of onlookers and climbed on to the platform. Small she was, but very perfectly made to scale—an ideal woman in miniature. Her features were cunningly chiselled, being both alluring and provocative. There was the least impertinent tilt to her little nose, and her eyes, which were very blue, laughed like the sea under an August sun. She was a complete stranger to Nolly, but that, he argued, was no reason why she should remain one. The seeming dullness of the afternoon was suddenly dispersed. To Nolly it was as if the sun had looked out through a dingy wrack of clouds. He climbed up on to the roundabout.

The fair stranger had taken one of the outside wooden steeds, but she sat facing inwards towards the centre. Nolly appropriated the next horse and sat stiffly, contemplating the next move. The roundabout was of the ordinary kind. When the middle horse was down, the horses on either side of it were up, and they were now situated so that Nolly's face was almost on a level with the girl's. One swift glance he gave her, then another, and the second confirmed the impression of the first. This girl, whoever she was, was laughing at him. Her blue eyes were alight with amusement. So he leaned a little sideways and towards her.

"Excuse me," he said, "I wonder whether you'd mind advising me. Ought I to say that I've met you somewhere before, or ought I to begin talking about the weather?"



"If you haven't yet been snubbed on a roundabout, I can see that I shall have to add to your experiences." "It can't be done. On a swing it might be possible. On a switchback it might be comparatively easy. But on a roundabout, never."

"Both openings are rather cold," said the girl pleasantly, "and they're also equally transparent. Couldn't you have knocked against me and apologised?"

"No. Apologies never lead anywhere. You'd only have nodded and murmured a polite word. Even in Tooting they only say 'Granted.' The weather or something like it

has to be dragged in sooner or later. A week or two ago I was having tea on an express, and, owing to the oscillations of the carriage, I found myself pushing a bun into somebody else's mouth. But even that didn't lead to more than half a dozen words."

The girl laughed.

"I wonder," she said, "whether I ought to snub you or whether I ought to get down and leave you."

"You can't get down," said Nolly; "we've started."

Even as he spoke the platform began to revolve and the wooden horses to rise and fall.

"And you can't snub me, either," he announced triumphantly. "I've never been snubbed by anyone on a roundabout. I don't believe it can be done."

"In that case I suppose I shall have to endure you."

"Fortitude," said Nolly, "is one of the

never. I don't know why, but it probably has something to do with centrifugal force or the reflex action."

"Have you never heard a moral story about curiosity and a cat?"

"If it isn't really a moral story I've heard it already, and if it is I don't want to hear it. This is much better. We're chatting away quite pleasantly, aren't we? I'm sure it was *fête* that brought us together. It only remains that we should know each other a little better. Do you jazz or play tennis, or are you a bimetallist?"

The girl laughed again, but there was a faint air of mystification in her tone.

"I'd no idea you were going to be so absurd," she said.

"Of course you didn't. You didn't even know of my existence until a minute or two ago."

She looked at him curiously. It was the little sprig of rosemary in his buttonhole which seemed to attract her gaze.



"Intermittently the stentorian voice of Bunk could be heard, inviting customers to roll, bowl, or pitch."

higher virtues. It's strange I haven't seen you before. Are you staying somewhere in the neighbourhood?"

"If you haven't yet been snubbed on a roundabout, I can see that I shall have to add to your experiences."

"It can't be done. On a swing it might be possible. On a switchback it might be comparatively easy. But on a roundabout,

"I wonder," she said quietly. "Well, we can't talk here."

Nolly was not even mystified at the moment, since he attached no particular meaning to her words. With the organ blaring in their ears conversation was not easily carried on. When at last the roundabout stopped, the girl dismounted without waiting to be helped, and, having glanced

over her shoulder, thus giving Nolly an unspoken invitation to follow her, she stepped briskly through the scattered crowd and presently halted some twenty yards from the nearest human being. She was still smiling, but her eyes were mysterious when Nolly drew level with her, and he remarked in her suddenly a queer furtiveness of manner. She said nothing, but stood regarding him intently, her brows slightly arched as if she would ask a question. Then very deliberately she rubbed the knuckles of one little gloved hand in the palm of the other, and stared at him, her brows slightly arched, as if she were asking him if he understood the significance of what she did.

Nolly concealed his ignorance in the only way possible. Perhaps she was trying to make him the victim of some elaborate joke, but for the present he saw no harm in playing up to her. So he nodded gravely as who should say that he understood.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "I was very nearly sure, but I had to make quite certain."

"What made you so nearly sure?" Nolly inquired.

"Oh, well, there was this!" She touched the sprig of rosemary. "I suppose you couldn't find any forget-me-not?"

"I couldn't, as a matter of fact."

"Tupe said you'd be wearing forget-me-not, but that's near enough. But I guessed even before I saw it. Tupe always gets gentlemen if he can. But it was a bit awkward, all the same. He ought to have managed it so that we met before."

"That's just what I've been thinking all along," muttered Nolly, who was just then thankful that the human ear does not lift like a terrier's when its owner's interest is completely captured.

"And of course," pursued the girl, "you must have guessed I was Mollie Welldon, and didn't like to ask straight out. That's why you sat beside me and talked to me. I saw all that, of course. Mind if I call you Dicky?" Tupe always speaks of you as Dicky."

"Charmed, I'm sure, Mollie."

The girl laughed rather nervously.

"Well, that sounds nice and friendly," she said. "Now we can get on together. What do you know?"

Nolly uttered a short dry cough.

"Precious little, I'm afraid," he said.

She nodded comprehendingly.

"Ah! Well, I didn't expect too much. I never did believe much in pumping

servants. It only gets them suspicious and sets them talking. And I suppose this young baronet and his brother are pretty standoffish and unapproachable."

"Both snobs," said Nolly, with relish. "Want to know your family history before they nod to you."

Mollie inclined her small head.

"Just so! Well, it can't be helped. Tupe doesn't expect too much. If we can get hold of the plate, so much the better, but there are always those miniatures in the drawing-room, and other unconsidered trifles which may be lying about. I believe those miniatures are worth a lot more than Tupe pretends, and, what's more, I believe he's got a customer for them."

Nolly lit a cigarette, holding the match between hands which were not quite steady.

"Shouldn't wonder," he muttered, puffing. "Tupe's no fool."

"One thing," the girl continued brightly, "there's no police about. Didn't even see one on the lawn. Dare say they'll be here, though, when the real crowd comes. Question is, whether we start in now while it's fairly quiet, or wait until later."

Nolly affected to consider.

"I'm rather in favour of getting it over," he said. "If we wait, more people are likely to notice us. And there's always the chance of a policeman or two coming along."

"I don't mind these country police much," said the girl airily. "But of course it's possible that one of 'em *might* recognise an old friend. Wouldn't matter to me, but awkward for you, poor dear! Well, we'll obey the good old business motto, and Do It Now. Thank goodness some of the stalls on the lawn are so close to the house that they're almost sure to carry me inside when I do my faint. You'd better go on in front. I shall faint just near the fancy needlework stall. You can be standing near, and run and pick me up. We'd better not be seen talking together any more. About ten minutes' time do?"

"Beautifully," said Nolly.

He lifted his hat and turned thoughtfully away. Two minutes later he was instructing Rutherford, the butler.

"Oh, Rutherford, you'd better telephone for Constable Hewitt. Tell him to come up as soon as he can. Just say that I want to see him. If he isn't in, tell his wife that he's very urgently wanted, and to get a message sent to him wherever he is."

"Very good, Mr. Oliver."

"Oh, and, Rutherford, in about five

minutes' time a lady will faint close to Mrs. Leyden's stall."

"Yes, Mr. Oliver," said Rutherford, unperturbed.

"You will be somewhere at hand to help me carry her into the drawing-room. You will address me as 'sir,' and not as 'Mr. Oliver.' I am a perfect stranger to you, and I have gone to the assistance of a lady in distress. Is that quite clear to you?"

"Perfectly clear, sir," replied Rutherford.

"Right-oh! You needn't say a word about this to anyone else. Get on the telephone as quick as you can."

### III.

THE weakness which afflicted the young lady, who was a stranger in the neighbourhood, attacked her suddenly. She reeled and would have fallen if Nolly had not seen what was about to happen and stepped forward in time to catch her in his arms. She hung limp against him, moaning softly, her eyes closed, her mouth drooping at the corners.

Fortunately, too, Rutherford happened to be passing close at hand bearing a teacup. This he set down and promptly assisted Nolly in carrying the distressed lady into the house. It was all done so quickly that comparatively few people witnessed the incident. Mrs. Leyden, however, saw, and came hurrying up with offers of help, but Nolly managed to stop her.

"It's quite all right," he said. "She's coming round now. You can't do anything. A short rest and a dash of brandy will pull her round again. It's the heat, of course."

Mrs. Leyden hesitated, and then, remembering that her stall was unattended, and that there was no lack of feminine assistance, turned on her heel once more.

Together Nolly and Rutherford carried the girl into the drawing-room and laid her at full length on a brocaded settee, propping up her head with cushions. The girl was sighing heavily now, and her eyes were open.

"She's better already, you see," said Nolly. "I suppose nobody will mind her resting here for a bit."

"Certainly not, sir," said Rutherford, "I'm sure my master would wish it. Is there anything I can fetch?"

"Yes. You might bring just a tot of liqueur brandy."

"Very good, sir."

He went swiftly, closing the door, and on the instant Mollie laughed and plunged convulsively with her feet.

"Good, Dicky," she whispered joyously. "Tupe does find the right sort of men. Fancy ordering that man about as if you were the master here! There's some of the miniatures—over there. Go and look at 'em. I daren't move until he's brought in the brandy."

Rutherford brought in a bottle, glass, and syphon on a silver tray. The girl eyed the tray appraisingly.

"You can slip that inside your coat if you like," she said to Nolly when the door had been closed. "You'd better have a nip of brandy. I hate the stuff."

Nolly shook his head.

"Too early in the day for me. Well, here we are, Mollie, and there's no hurry. We can stay here as long as we like. That butler fellow won't trouble us. He's helping on the lawn."

The girl sprang off the settee.

"It couldn't have gone better," she cried. "Dicky, you're an angel. I've a good mind to let you give me a kiss."

A moment later Nolly realised that he was not the consummate actor he had imagined himself to be.

"Oh, no!" he cried out, aghast. "No! Don't!"

He realised that he had fallen badly, and he also realised that it could not be helped. In those green days of his he had kissed a hundred girls, and would probably kiss a hundred more. But to kiss a girl and then hand her over to the police! Of the Things Which Are Not Done this stood very near the top of this list, and his mind's eye saw it printed in fine gold type.

The girl's expression suddenly changed, and a faint flush dyed her cheeks.

"Why, what's the matter?" she asked icily. "Don't you want to kiss me? Am I—do you think I'm ugly?"

"You know you're not," he said quickly, and went on, floundering badly: "But I say, you know—you don't understand—it's rather—"

"Oh, all right," she said very quietly. "Only most men wouldn't have taken it like that."

"Are you in the habit of—of kissing?" he asked, wondering why a mild indignation was stirring within him.

"I am not," she answered sharply. "I'm not that sort. Only—only you're different."

"How am I different?"

She lowered her gaze and fell to tugging at the fingers of her gloves.



"Whatever you are now," she muttered, "you were a gentleman once. Do you think I can't tell. My parents were genteel folk. If only mother——"

She broke off abruptly.

"Come on," she said in a different tone; "you can pocket some of these. Let's get out of this quick, while the going's good."

"There isn't any hurry, I tell you," Nolly said quietly. "Better get back to the settee. That butler may look in again to see if he can get you anything. Then you can tell him that all you want is a rest, and he'll leave us alone."

She hesitated.

"All right—if you think it's safer like that. I'll obey your orders, although you've insulted me. Good haul, this—for Tupe. Don't suppose our share will come to much."

"Ever thought of double-crossing him?" Nolly inquired casually.

She shook her head vehemently.

"I haven't! To begin with, where would one dispose of the stuff? Besides, one is safer with Tupe than working alone. And I don't think either of us would care to have him for an enemy."

"Still, it seems pretty unfair that we should take all the risk and he should get nearly all the profit. What would you do, Mollie, if you landed a haul of, say, ten thousand pounds?"

"Do?" She uttered a little high laugh. "What should I do? Do you really want more than one guess? Do you think I'm doing this because I like it? Do you think I wouldn't live honestly if I had the chance? Try me with a two-pound-a-week job and see."

Nolly found himself staring blankly at her. He took out his cigarette-case and began to tap a cigarette on the outside.

"How did you fall in with Tupe?" he asked, trying to speak casually.

"When I came out of prison. He offered me dishonest work after all the Pharisees had conspired to prevent me from living honestly. I went to prison for three months for stealing. You don't know what that means. At least, you don't know what it meant to me. You're different. You don't care. You've never wanted to go straight. Tupe told me all about you."

"I wish," said Nolly uncomfortably, "that he'd been equally communicative with regard to yourself."

"Oh, my story's simple enough. My mother was left a widow with a tiny

income—so tiny an annuity that I don't know how we both managed to live on it. We had a poky little house in a big London suburb. Somehow she squeezed out the money for me to have occasional new frocks and go to a dance and belong to the tennis club. I don't suppose there's anything fresh or original or diverting in all this. Up to a point, it's just the sordid story of so many people's lives.

"One summer mother fell ill, and there wasn't the money to buy her the little luxuries she needed. It wasn't any use my giving up the tennis club—my subscription was already paid. I was training to be a secretary in those days, but I wasn't yet fit to take a job. Well, money began to be missed out of the dressing-rooms, and mother began to have new-laid eggs and cream and beef-tea. She didn't know where the money came from. She thought a mean old brother of father's was giving it to me. It went on for a long time before they caught me, and because it had been going on for so long, they said they had no option but to prosecute. The rest you can guess. My mother died while I was in prison. I'm not naturally crooked, but I'd have done more than steal for mother if necessary. And now—well, there isn't much chance for a girl who's been to prison, you know."

Nolly got up from his chair and came slowly across the room towards her.

"Is that story true?" he asked.

She looked up at him and laughed. There were faint traces of scorn about her finely chiselled features.

"Did you think I needed to save my face with you?" she asked. "I'm what I am from sheer necessity. Tupe knows it, too. I'd save myself to-morrow if I could."

"Then save yourself now," said Nolly quietly. "Go out through that French window and get away quick. The police will be here any minute. Don't waste time. I've a little money here which will help you for the present. Then you can write to me and I'll try to find you a job."

The girl sat upright with a start and uttered a short laugh, but suspicion was already lurking in her eyes.

"What on earth are you raving about?" she demanded. "The police——"

"Yes, I sent for them. Your friend Dicky is already under lock and key. I am Oliver Brimpton, Sir John's younger brother. I'm sorry for you. I swear I'm sorry. You told me your story just in time."

The colour faded from her face. Her lips

parted, but she did not speak. She sat staring at him dumbly.

"You must go," Nolly said quickly. "What? Don't you believe me? Listen!"

He ran to the French window, opened it, and called out cheerily to an aged rustic who was ambling down the path.

"Hullo, Holland, how are you? What do you think of the show?"

Back came the answer:

"Fine, Mr. Oliver, sir. I thought, now, as you might be at t'other end. I looked for 'ee on the swings."

Nolly laughed and turned away from the window.

"Did you hear that?" he asked.

The girl nodded. Her face twitched, and she rose stumbingly to her feet. He saw her reel as she crossed the room towards him.

"Write to me," said Nolly. "We'll help you—my brother and I. We'll find you something to do, somehow. You will write, won't you?"

She nodded and still she did not speak. Nolly felt in his breast pocket, in which he knew there were seven or eight one-pound notes. He proffered them shamefacedly.

"Do you mind—taking these?" he stammered.

"Oh, no, no!" she gasped in a small hurt voice. "I don't know what to say to you.

You've been so—so sweet to me. I want to crawl away somewhere and die."

"Please take them," he begged. "We—I—want you to—to live honestly until we can do something for you."

But her hands were clasped tightly before her, and once more she shook her head.

"I shan't—shan't starve for a week or two," she faltered. "If you want me—to be honest—give me this."

She plucked at the scrap of evergreen herb in his lapel without waiting for a word or a sign of assent.

"That's rosemary," she said. "Rosemary for remembrance."

"The problem which vexes me at present," said Nolly to himself a little later, "is whether the world is a great deal wickeder than I thought, or not half so wicked."

At the sight of Rutherford he spoke aloud.

"Ah," he said, "you might get Hewitt on the telephone if he hasn't started off for here. Tell him that I only wanted to let him know that he needn't come up here this evening. Now they've got that fellow by the heels, I don't think there are any more bad characters about."

With that he turned and walked out into the garden.

"A very dull show," he reflected, "but what an interlude!"

## AUTUMN.

**I SAW the trees together stand  
Proudly, like some old warrior band,  
In burnished panoply arrayed  
To meet their death-stroke, unafraid.**

**When lo, through Autumn mists the sun  
Poured on their ranks his benison:  
"My rays that gave you life must wane,  
Yet shall I bring you Spring again."**

**O'er all the woods a radiance came,  
Quick'ning their gold into a flame,  
And on my ears their answer fell:  
"We trust you, brother; it is well."**

ARTHUR H. STREETEN.

# THE DARK RAVINE

By CECIL B. WATERLOW

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

THERE was one thing about the hotel that was in no way second-rate, namely, its view across the Rhone valley. Beyond this vast atmospheric gulf, into which the colour of the sky descended, shone the celestial whiteness of those superb peaks, the Weisshorn and the Rothorn, and at sundown their summits stood out like flaming torches long after shades of night possessed the world of men.

On this their first evening in Switzerland, Myrtle and Rose sat upon a public balcony and marvelled at the spectacle, dumb before its cosmic splendour. Their contemplations, however, were disturbed by the intrusion of a stranger. They had observed him at *table d'hôte*, because there were few other diners, it being as yet early in the summer season, and because of his unkempt and melancholy appearance.

Being women of the world, aged twenty-eight and twenty-four respectively, and each the proud possessor of a university degree, they did not hesitate to drop into conversation with a stranger. When they expatiated quite mildly about the sunset, he quoted that cynical little rhyme of Heine's, paraphrasing the last lines thus :—

"Cheer up, dear lady : it's a very old trick.  
The sun goes down over there, and comes back  
behind here ;  
And that's all there is to it. . . ."

But he was not amused either by Heine's irony or by anything else, and he did not pretend to be. He described without enthusiasm how he had tramped all the way from St. Gervais in Savoy, avoiding the Chamonix valley on account of its popularity, and as to where he was going next he had no idea, he could not make up his mind.

"How lovely," said Myrtle, "not to have to make up your mind !"

She was twenty-eight and had just qualified as a doctor of medicine, so that she was faced with the prospect of having constantly to make up her mind about the real nature of complaints.

"What, then," he queried, "would you do if you had complete freedom of choice ?"

The question was a slight shock to one accustomed to believe that she possessed such freedom. It jerked her mind just a little way out of its normal groove.

"Perhaps I should travel—go round the world."

"I've been round three times. What would you do then ?"

"I should go somewhere where no one has ever been before—explore."

"I've lived for months where no white man has ever set foot. What then ?"

"Oh, then, I suppose, I should have to sit down and write about it !"

The stranger rose from his chair and stood silhouetted against the glowing sky. He gazed towards the north-west, where lately the sun had set, and what he said seemed to be addressed to no one in particular.

"Suppose that you could not."

At twenty-eight, after taking a high degree at a learned university, one does not suppose such things. Myrtle was silent, and Rose took up the conversation.

"I should try to immortalise myself somehow or other," declared the younger girl. "If I couldn't make discoveries, or write something that mattered, or paint, or act, or do anything that people bow down to—"

"That they pay for," put in the stranger.

"It's the same thing, I suppose. But what I mean is, if I couldn't succeed, at least I'd get some satisfaction from trying. I'd get that, and leave immortality to take care of itself."

"And, having satisfied that desire, what then ?"

"Oh, I'd hold on to my divine dissatisfaction."

"You would have to beware. Suppose it lost its divinity and turned into a demon that gave you no peace ?"

"Oh, but it wouldn't !"



"Alone together, they discussed him, of course."

"Mine has. I'll try to explain. Dissatisfaction, like appetite, grows from feeding on knowledge, only it grows beyond all bounds. I've tramped with my body and tramped with my mind. From Newton to Einstein I've plodded, only to feel a sort of blind rage at seeing that there were always more things that I could not understand. When a savage ceases to worship a grinning image with fear and achieves some sort of spiritual religion, he gets, I suppose, the kind of satisfaction I got when Einstein destroyed for me those old nightmare ideas of infinite time and space. But it is freedom that one goes after, and I haven't got that. I may have missed something by the way—something more obvious than the curvature of space. I sometimes think so. I heard them sing the 'Adeste Fideles' in St. Paul's on Christmas Day, and then everything else vanished, and I was on the edge of freedom. I was able to see that all this appearance of reality is only a symbol. I, who have no religion, got there; but I could not go on, and I lost it."

"You must have been very tired at the time," commented Myrtle, the doctor. But

he brushed this aside. Laying bare his mind for the inspection of strangers, unthinkable to some people, seemed to stimulate him and brighten his gloom.

"I had another glimpse when I was here last summer. Up on the mountains, a couple of miles to the north, there's a deep cleft called the Gorge de la Dérochoire. It's quite easy to climb up it; but at the top there's no way to get on to the slopes above except across a ledge a few inches wide along a cliff that's almost perpendicular. The local guides think nothing of it and go across carrying all sorts of things; and I thought nothing of it, but when I went over it last summer I very nearly fell. It was carelessness, of course, but it gave me that bad little moment when you feel something worse coming. However, I got across all right, and then sat down to rest. I suppose I must have fallen asleep. The grass slopes were full of gentians and the air was sunny and still. I could hear cowbells thousands of feet below, tinkling up with the murmur of waterfalls. Those white peaks over there stood out above the valley mists and seemed close enough to touch.

Then I found I *could touch them*. I floated round the Rothorn and the Weisshorn, and I could see inside them as well—I could see what they really are, though I couldn't describe it. . . ."

He broke off, suddenly apologetic and afraid that he was boring them.

He seemed scarcely old enough to be the typical disappointed man, and he looked too strong for physical causes of melancholy. Rose reflected that when a fellow-creature tries to hide from one it is often possible to see what the other wishes to conceal—an amusing game; but when a soul professes to lay itself bare, then indeed one can neither see all nor interpret what is seen.

The stranger offered to act as guide, taking them on the morrow to the Gorge de la Dérochoire. Having agreed to this, the two friends retired to their room, leaving him to gaze at the rising moon.

Alone together, they discussed him, of course. A disturbance had been created for them, though they were loath to admit it.

"There must be many people," said Rose, "wandering about the world who are really full of possibilities—suppressed genuises, even, who haven't got the energy to express themselves."

"Thyroid deficiency!"

"Why not ask him to let you try some sort of operation?"

Myrtle had not yet escaped from the materialism that often imprisons the mind of the medical student. Life had not yet pulled hard enough to draw her forth.

"The operation hasn't been invented yet. If the force that drives a man three times round the world can't make him help the world go round, then probably the only operation for his particular neck is to break it."

"Don't say that; think of the rock wall he was talking about."

Rose wondered whether her friend's harshness was intended to display to both of them that she was not deeply interested in the stranger, and, if so, why such a demonstration should be considered necessary.

She loved Myrtle Arden as much as anyone in the world. Five years ago she had begun by venerating her as a brilliant and beautiful superwoman, a female Siegfried who should conquer the world; and, to her rapture, this heroine had bent down, embraced and taken her up, as it were, to herself. The great and brilliant Myrtle, who seemed to stand above worldly weak-

ness like the summit of the Weisshorn, was even then capable of admiring the morning glory of fresh youthfulness, especially when it appeared in dingy lecture rooms and laboratories, studying frogs' hearts and the internal arrangements of dead rabbits. In due course they had come to know each other—the weakness and the strength of each. But their characters had proved equal to the strain, able to grasp and hold solid friendship.

"There'll be no danger on the wall, because, if we don't like it, we won't go on it."

Myrtle thus dismissed the subject and continued:

"I suppose he's what the French call *un raté*—someone who has tried, perhaps not very hard, and failed, perhaps more than once."

She was a little vain of her French.

"He said, 'Suppose you could not,'"

Rose reminded her.

"And you tried to make out that that need not be the end."

"We ought to go to sleep."

"One doesn't seem to want sleep up here."

"Good night, little Rosy."

"Good night."

## II.

THE next morning, on finding letters from home stuck on the green board that the hotel provided for that purpose, they got a surprise. In addition to their own correspondence there were other letters that they could not help seeing, and these were addressed to Albert Bright, Esq. Now, that rather unusual name could belong to none other than the well-known author of "The Fringe of the World," "Off the Map," and those stories of travel and adventure which for years had been a popular feature of more than one magazine. They just had time to decide to conceal this discovery when the individual in question appeared, equipped for the day's outing complete with rucksack piolet,\* rope, heavily-nailed boots, and anti-solar glasses. They sallied forth into the morning sunshine and began the tedious ascent towards the Dérochoire gorge.

As they toiled upwards with the sun on their backs, the stranger, now known to them as Albert Bright, the successful writer, began to talk, and continued his discourse with increasing fervour as his companions' breath became shorter, so that they were incapable

\* Combined alpenstock and ice-axe.

of comment or response. From time to time they turned to gaze upon the gorgeous scene across the Rhone valley, as it framed itself between pine trees and bushes on which the dew still glittered. Thin columns of blue smoke rose from the roofs of chalets here and there below, and the mountain air, full of unsullied sunshine, bore to their labouring lungs the very breath and perfume of life itself.

"When you come to the ends of the earth," he said, "and then go past them, as I have done, and round again to the beginning, you get the feeling of being in a cage like a dormouse going round and round on a wheel. I tried going backwards, having a look at the earth's rocks building themselves up in ancient oceans, having a look at the huge, fantastic reptiles that lived long ago. I only felt myself to be no better than those Saurian reptiles for all I can accomplish."

"But if you really want to accomplish more than they did," gasped Rose, "isn't that in itself something to go on with?"

"Certainly it's something to go on with: one has to go on, anyway. But we see ourselves being led to the certainty that it is futile to go on. The Saurians were lucky enough to miss that."

"I'm a doctor," asserted Myrtle, "and I don't expect ever to arrive at any dead ends, except my own."

"Ah, you are still so young that you don't yet know what it is to be young! To know that, you must first feel old."

"Stop a minute! I'm perspiring and panting, whilst you, who say I am so young, are perfectly cool, and can climb and talk at the same time as much as you like."

They paused to look back. They had climbed about a thousand feet, and the dazzling summits of the Weisshorn and the Rothorn appeared to have risen with them and to be dominating the earth.

"From just above the Dérochoire wall," he said, "you get the finest view. Those peaks frame themselves in the gorge, which looks dead black by comparison. The place naturally has a special fascination for me after my last year's experience. Local tradition has it that two or three hundred years ago that cleft was formed by an earthquake, a cracking of the earth's shabby old crust along a line of fault, no doubt. Half the mountain, they say, threatened to fall and block the valley, and there was such crashing and roaring of falling rocks, with such a rising up of dust into the sky,

that the rumour spread across Europe of a great volcanic eruption in Switzerland. Anyone who saw that earthquake witnessed a cosmic event such as happens only once in countless ages."

"And you would have given your eyes to have seen such a thing!" said Myrtle. "How can you keep up the pretence that life is not full of interest? Besides, that is not the only thing that you have pretended to us."

"I'm not quite certain what you mean, but I think I can convince you that I have only told the truth. A misfortune happened to me last year. A distant relative, almost my only relation, died"—they felt uneasy, lest, without knowing it, they should have said something unkind—"and I was left an independent income of about two thousand a year. I never had any illusions about it. I knew at once that it would strip from me the one thing that seemed to make activity worth while—the necessity for earning my own living." They gasped. "You see, I began far up amongst the stars—I was going to create something that would be immortal. There was to be a new glory in the world, which then seemed capable of containing glory. But the years that came were empty; the things that I tried to create seemed to fall into ashes as they left my hands."

"There are others," said Rose, "who can't create and yet get quite a lot out of life."

"They live on emotions—passion, hate, pity. There was no sob-stuff in my life."

"And if there had been, what difference would it have made?"

"How can I tell? I've never tried eating soap mixed with mud, so don't know what it would be like."

"But have you an idea?"

"Yes. . . . Lots of fellows manage to nourish themselves with ideas. I ought never to have said, 'suppose that you could not.' There's no reason why you, or anyone else, except a mug like me, should have to face that; and I could have faced it, or forgotten it, if it hadn't been for the money. You see, I could do little things, for which people were willing to pay enough to keep me alive. I was a burden on no one, and that seemed worth while. My name may be known to you. . . ." They nodded. "But I was a tramp, and a tramp won't live on ideas. I had to go after things. For a time I went about the world, in childish innocence, looking for the Blue Bird! I saw everything, but got nothing; and I said,



"... their precarious descent together to where the body lay."

'O God, why did you make a world in which I think there is beauty?' And the answer was that the world is only a symbol for something else, and that tramping about it leads nowhere. But the wretched tramp cannot stop. Once a tramp, always a tramp. He has to go on. He asks to be the Universal tramp, 'the Pilgrim of Eternity.' Still childish, you may say, for who that has studied has not had such thoughts? After thirty, one ought to get past them. But I didn't. I couldn't create and I couldn't rest contented as a creature. If you can't get what you want, you may say, at least, you can want what you get; and perhaps that's really where I've failed—in not even being able to do that. Consequently I have been without hope, and a few years without hope will kill the strongest, though others seem to have more courage than I."

They reached the bottom of the gorge, and the difficulties of the ascent compelled them to concentrate upon immediate things until they emerged at the top. To their left was a grassy hummock with a few small

firs clinging precariously to the rocks, and on their right the rock wall towered upwards, apparently blocking the upper end of the gorge completely. They could see no ledge by which it might be possible to traverse this cliff to the grass slopes some twenty yards away on its southern side. However, after they had eaten their lunch on the little island in the sky which seemed to have been provided providentially, he showed the two girls that the

ledge was really there. With the aid of the rope that he had brought to give confidence, he got them across without much difficulty, and they climbed the steep slopes beyond, until they reached the region where vegetation ends. They sat down still amongst the chaotic rocks, and there they seemed to be in that upper world to which such things as the summit of the Matterhorn belong.

"It was here, then, that you had that dream?" Myrtle inquired.

"No, a little lower down, on the grass."

Both girls were feeling the effect of the great height. The sensation of having everything far below one, of being suspended precariously, is strange and sometimes nauseating at first. The vault of the sky was deep sapphire, and the sun, at this elevation of nearly ten thousand feet, blazed with hard, white light. They had never climbed a mountain before, and their guide saw that they had better not attempt to reach the summit.



"The crumpled body lying helpless on steeply sloping rocks."



At this level there was still frost at night, so that the grass slopes were damp and slippery after the sun had done its work. He warned them to be careful as they descended, and when close to the rock wall again, they used the rope, because the grass ended on an overhung cliff with a drop of about fifty feet into the funnel of the *Dérochoire* gorge.

Rose went first, because she had the better head; but she slipped on the wet grass in the last three yards of the descent. She did not quite go over the edge. Her two hands caught firmly on to strong tufts of grass, whilst her stick went clattering down into the abyss. The weight of her body did not come fully on to the rope, and, if it had, their guide's strength and experience would have been amply sufficient to prevent disaster. All would have been well but for the effect of this slight slip upon Myrtle. Sick and faint, she felt utterly unable to take another step.

Imagination is a funny thing: it makes the shadows real and blots out the obvious things. The fall into the abyss that her friend had escaped presented itself to Myrtle in all its horror as though it had actually happened. Her limbs refused to work; she could not move.

The problem of getting the two girls across the ledge had to be faced, and it was not difficult in the case of Rose, who was first piloted to safety. Bright then devised an ingenious scheme. Attaching one end of the rope to the stump of a fir tree on the little island in the air that had served them for their picnic, he secured Myrtle with the other end, and then pushed her along the ledge, bidding her draw herself forwards whilst he steadied her from behind. The scheme worked perfectly. She fixed her gaze on the tree stump beside which Rose was seated. She was just about to take the first step up on to the hammock of grass with her right foot, when her left knee, taking her weight for an instant, seemed to give way, so that she fell forward, clutching instinctively at the grass and stones before her. She had dropped the rope, and if her hands could not now support her weight, she must fall fifty feet into the gorge. The man behind her had no sufficient hand-hold on his right. His other hand held the rope, and he brought his left foot forwards to support Myrtle's dangling feet from beneath. As he did so, the fragment of rock wall that his right hand grasped came away and he swung outwards into space.

He got both hands on to the rope as he fell, and the shock as it tautened did not dislodge his grip. He dangled like the bob weight of a pendulum, and all might have been well but for the swing of the rope. It brought him once with a bump against the cliff side; he spun round, swung out, then back for another bump, this time on the back of his head. Darkness closed in upon him as his fingers loosed their grip. Dangling thus, he had about thirty feet to fall into the gorge, but the downward rush and the thud upon the rocks below were mercifully cut out of his consciousness. The two above could not see it, but they heard the thud, then a clatter of falling stones dying away into absolute silence.

Such details as the dragging of Myrtle up on to the island in the air and their precarious descent together to where the body lay were never afterwards clear in Rose's mind. She had to act, yet at the same time she was able to stand outside herself and watch what was going on. But for Myrtle the crumpled body lying helpless on steeply sloping rocks was a reality, the potent appeal of which steadied her nerves by blocking out the experiences of her immediate past.

Her first examination revealed a broken femur and dislocated knee, and that the wound at the back of Bright's head was not serious. Concentrating on these things, she had forgotten Rose until she had discovered enough to send her down for help. She paused on looking up, because against the cavernous blackness of the far side of the gorge the girl's face appeared as a spectre, white as the ashes of a fire long dead. In this face she read the unspoken words: "Let me stay with him." But this was no time for yielding to sentimental appeals.

"You must go, dear," she said, "as fast as you can for help. I shall want bandages, splints, and antiseptics. Be careful: remember everything depends upon you. Don't take any risks as you go down."

She watched her slowly descending until she looked like a tiny insect creeping among the rocks far below. She had straightened Bright's shattered leg, and the icy water trickling down the gorge, with which she bathed his head, was inducing signs of returning consciousness. The sun, which never penetrated into this cleft, was now sloping towards the horizon, and the cold was intense. She divested herself of most of her garments so as to wrap him up, and finally she gave him also the warmth of her

own body. It was absurd, of course, to feel squeamish about doing that; one must be practical in such a case; one must avoid that feeling of being alone in a boundless Universe with just one other soul—alone, alight with life, amidst shadows profound and inscrutable; one must keep hold of the rest of the world—the familiar round of daily experiences; one must not let imagination play tricks, making all else seem less than nothing beside this present moment.

But Myrtle could not suppress the feeling that this was her immortal hour, her glimpse, never to be repeated on earth, of the sources of Life and the unreality of death. "These rocks, this dark gorge, even the bitter cold," she reflected, "are all symbols of something else. This place is full of symbols. I'm nearly half-way through with life, and the remaining time will go fast. What reason is there that I should not say I am finished, as he thinks he is? What reason? There is Rose: I love her. There is my work: I love that, even though I may never be great. I have it! It is not the work, or even Rose herself, or anyone else. The reason is just Love!"

He stirred. His eyelids trembled open, then closed again, as he muttered "Where are you?"

She tried to reassure him, telling him to lie still and rest without speaking. Returning consciousness meant the coming of pain, which would be with him in varying intensity for weeks. She wanted to keep this monster at bay as long as possible. At first he would not feel his leg at all, then gradually the pain would come, pitilessly taking possession of him. He looked at her vaguely, then spoke again.

"Where is she?"

Myrtle was silent for an instant, during which she was torn away from the Tree of Life and the Gates of Immortality—torn away and flung back to earth, there to crawl and toil like an industrious ant for the rest of her days. But courage did not fail her; she proceeded at once to fulfil her destiny, answering his question in suitably soothing tones.

"She will come back soon, and then we shall get you down quite comfortably. Don't try to move; you have a broken leg. That's all, apart from minor cuts and bruises. Do you remember now?"

"Yes, but she was sitting just up above you when you slipped, and I tried to stop you. Is she still up there?"

A man must not be worried when he is just regaining consciousness, and he was terribly worried. It would never do; he must be soothed. A man also is liable to utter truths in this condition that he might normally conceal—a fact but too well known to all who follow the medical profession. Somehow or other she did not want to hear what she now knew that she must hear if he went on talking, so she merely told him that all was well with Rose, and that she had gone for help.

"We'll get you down, and you'll soon be comfortably in bed."

He shook his head and winced as the damaged limb began to assert its presence once more.

"I said that I was through with everything; I thought I was finished. It's funny, now that I've just discovered what rot that was, I'm finished after all. I suppose it serves me right."

"You're not finished," she asserted valiantly. But to his ears her voice sounded faint and far away as she added: "It seems that you are just at the beginning."

She was now kneeling beside him, bathing his head again in a manner that was intended to be brisk and business-like, but which actually did not partake of these qualities. He protested at being wrapped up in her garments, so that she was forced to assert professional authority.

"I seem to be seeing things differently," he remarked inconsequently; "it all looks much simpler somehow or other. I feel as though I were waking up—like falling out of bed, only I fell off that cliff. I never used to notice simple things; I couldn't see them." The thought flashed through her mind—a thought not to be encouraged—that there was one simple thing to which he was still blind. Then he added, more in his former manner: "Why, all the laughter and all the tears of life depend upon the simplest things, and those are the things that matter most."

She thought of his recent caustic remarks about sob-stuff; then a fantastic vision presented itself to her mind—Rose and the man who lay helpless before her going together to a cheap cinema and snivelling at the tragic moments in some trans-Atlantic super-production. Why not? If they were going to bob about on the little waves of life, she would sweep on, like a great liner, on some world-embracing course.

She tried to crush such thoughts; then others came. Would he ever have awakened to Rose's influence but for the fall? Probably he could now see a picture that she looked at herself sometimes—a little home with a garden of roses in summer, a cosy hearth in winter, a cat, a dog, and then—children. Why must she think of such things? They could not be for her.

When Rose returned with half a dozen willing helpers, Myrtle, like her patient, saw clearly something that was simple and obvious. Because Rose was in love, it was nothing to her to go up and down that awful gorge; she would have done it again and again, if necessary. She did not seem tired. But when at last they began the slow and agonising descent, Myrtle failed to see all that was in her friend's mind, probably because it concerned her more intimately than she could have suspected.

From the bottom of the gorge Rose went ahead to prepare the reception for the wounded man, and when they reached the hotel, nothing was lacking—except Rose.

Two hours passed before Myrtle was free to ascertain the cause of her absence. The leg was set, the patient had come round, and the case promised to be quite simple. Then she found a scribbled note in their room, and Rose's luggage—gone! She read the note without at first taking it in:

"I shall stop in Geneva for a bit. I

might be in the way while you have this case on hand. Let me hear from you that all goes well. Address Poste Restante.

"Yours ever,  
"ROSE."

Just that!

During the long night Myrtle came to understand it. Her little Rosy was brave and true. It was very beautiful. She was not going to stand in the way of a happiness that she thought might be destined for Myrtle. She was not going to shirk supreme self-sacrifice, should it be demanded of her. By going away she would get the truth unequivocally, and she would feel better able to endure it alone—should there be anything to endure. How greatly this action simplified things!

At the earliest possible moment in the morning she telegraphed:

"Return at once or patient may not recover."

It was drastic and grossly exaggerated, but the patient himself made it quite clear that some such action was necessary. He was no longer a tramp, nor ever would be again, though his leg would mend rapidly and be as sound as before. Yet in the years to come, when Myrtle would doubtless visit her dearest friends, the Albert Brights, she knew that in her heart there must always be the image of the Universal Tramp, as he had been that day.

## NOVEMBER.

**T**HE trees will shed their leaves for you,  
As the young will shed their dreams,  
Poor, crushed, mud-trodden, cast-off drift  
On chill Autumnal streams;  
And the dear, warm breast of Earth is cold,  
For youth is fled, and love is old.

The trees are wet with the tears of you  
For the things of yesterday—  
Bird-song and greenness, Summer dawns,  
And little winds at play.  
And dying flowers, dreaming, sigh  
For kisses from a butterfly.

*But I will to the winds with me,  
The clean cold winds, the red fire gleams,  
There's sterner stuff than Summer-time,  
And more in life than dreams.*

K. NORMAN BROWNE.

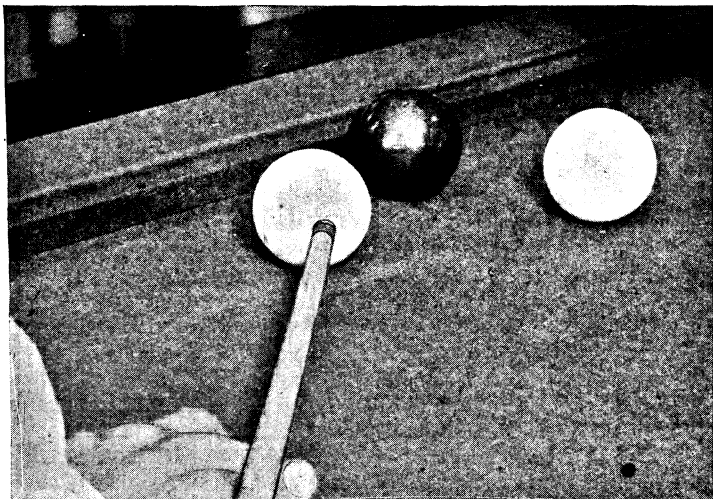


Photo by]

POSITION "A."

[Sport & General.

*The rules do not allow me to make more than twenty-five consecutive ball-to-ball cannons, but, with the balls as shown in the above photograph, it is possible to play a cannon by striking the cushion before the first object-ball and at the same time retain position for a further series of nursery cannons. I play very gently off the cushion in front of the red, and send my ball with a soft graze from red to white, touching the latter ball so finely that my ball comes clear.*

# ODD THINGS ABOUT BILLIARDS

By TOM NEWMAN

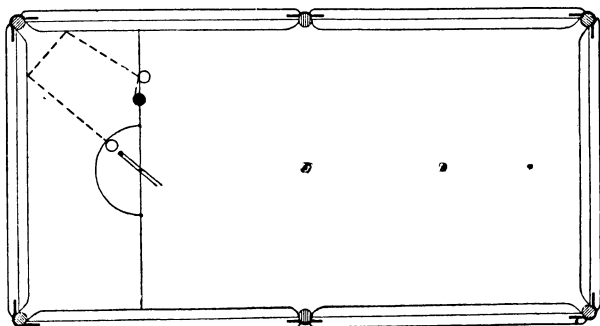
CHAMPION

THERE are many odd things connected with billiards. The very origin of the game is unknown. The first two recognised champions of billiards held the title between them for forty years without ever playing for it. The difference in proficiency between amateur and professional exponents is greater in billiards than in any other form of sport. It is the one game that ladies ought to play really well, but

scarcely play at all. Professional cuemen are the only men who live by sport and are genuinely anxious to concede starts to each other. Billiards is the only game now left in which our national supremacy is well

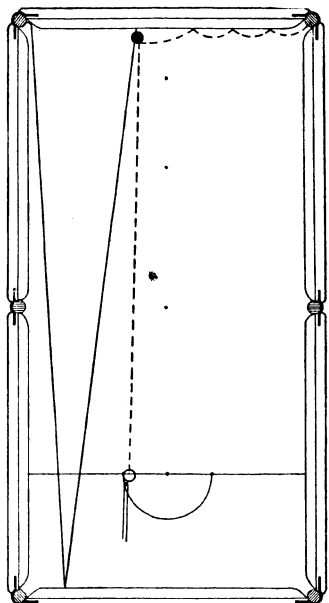
maintained. It is admitted to be a scientific game, yet the strange fact remains that mathematical experts cannot agree on a scientific definition of the simplest angle relating to it.

Turning to odd things I have noted in a



1.—This diagram illustrates a stroke played in an exhibition match. The red ball was not playable, being a dead "line ball," but the white was just clear of the bank line. My ball was in hand, and, using just a touch of right-hand side, I played in baulk and made the cannon off two cushions.

playing sense, my first diagram shows a stroke so unusual that I can only remember making it once in the course of an actual game. It chanced to crop up while I was



2.—A ricochet losing hazard is shown in the above diagram. The red is practically tight against the top cushion, and the stroke was made by hitting the red hard and three-quarter full, with plenty of top and left side on the cue-ball.

playing an exhibition game against an amateur. The red ball was not playable, being a dead "line ball," but the white was just clear of the baulk line. My ball was in hand, and, using just a touch of right-hand side, I played in baulk and made the cannon off two cushions as illustrated in my diagram. There was a little buzz of conversation among the spectators as I completed this cannon and when play was over I was asked to settle a little argument as to whether the stroke was allowable. It struck me as rather

odd to ask me to decide whether I had played fairly or not, but I explained that it is quite within the rules to play off one or more cushions in baulk to strike a ball which lies out of baulk. That was why I made the cannon off two cushions instead of off the baulk cushion only. In the latter case there was a big chance of my ball striking the red first, when the stroke would have been a foul.

When you progress towards advanced billiards, it is singular how very little it takes to make a big difference. This is well brought out in the two accompanying photos of nursery cannon positions. The average amateur would score with facility from either position, which is supremely easy if you do not have to trouble about keeping the balls together for close cannon play. That is my problem, and the photos illustrate a difficulty I often have to contend with. The rules do not allow me to make more than twenty-five consecutive ball-to-ball cannons, and when I have made twenty of them the marker is good enough to warn me that I am approaching my limit. Then I must make a cannon by striking the cushion before the first object-ball, and I have five strokes left in which to do this in a manner retaining position for nursery cannons, a very difficult thing to accomplish.

It is here that a mere turn of the ball makes all the difference. As the balls lie in

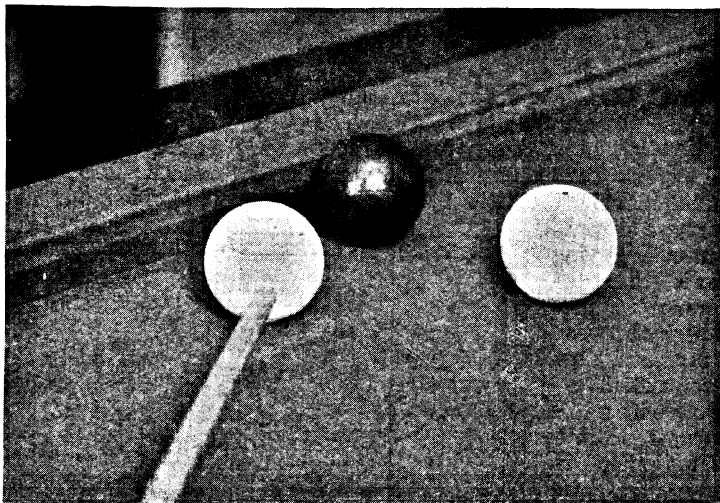


Photo by]

POSITION "B."

[Sport & General.

A turn of the balls makes all the difference in advanced billiards. The white ball, the second object-ball in my cannon, has been moved a mere fraction towards the cue as compared with its position in the first photograph, but it is now impossible for me to cannon off the cushion first and retain the desired position. My ball will drop too full on the white, and I shall be left "between them."

the photograph titled as Position A here reproduced, it is just possible for me to play very gently off the cushion in front of the red, and send my ball with a soft graze from the red to the white, touching the latter ball so finely to the left

that my ball comes clear for a fresh series of close cannons. But if the white, the second object-ball in my cannon, is moved the mere fraction towards the cue you will notice in the photograph given as Position B, then it is impossible for me to cannon

off the cushion first with the desired positional result. My ball is sure to drop too full on the white, I shall be left "between them," and my break of nursery cannons will assuredly finish.

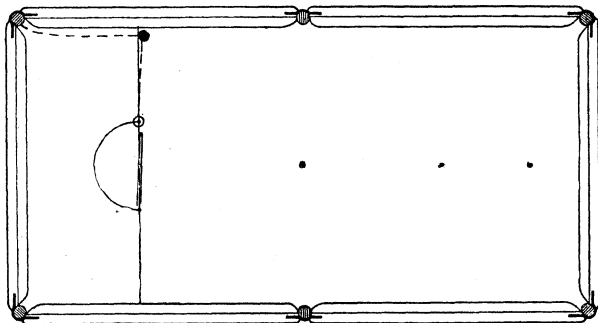
An almost startling contrast to these delicate tip-tap cannons is provided by the stroke shown in my second diagram. I made this during an exhibition game. Many of the odd things in billiards happen when circumstances allow more freedom than is permissible in professional matches. I had lost the white after making a useful break, and, not desiring to give a miss and freeze out the gentleman who was providing the opposition, I went for the ricochet losing hazard depicted in my diagram. The red was practically tight against the top cushion, and I made my stroke by hitting the red hard and three-quarter full, using plenty of top and left side on my ball. It came off in great style—such strokes generally do when you would almost as soon miss them as make them.

Really I scored more than I wanted, as the red doubled into the other top pocket, as

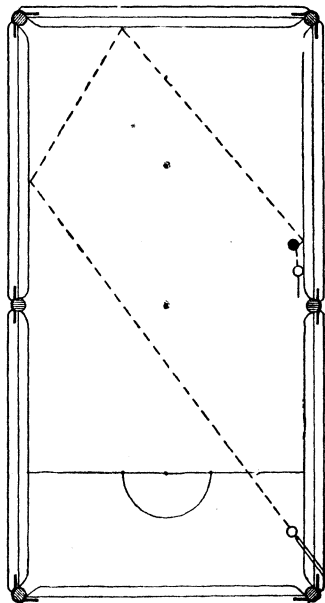
indicated by the continuous line in my diagram. This left me with the red on the spot and my ball in hand. Feeling that I could do nothing wrong after making such a remarkable six shot, I attempted the screw loser off the spotted red, scored it,

and cued along merrily to make a respectable total off the red ball only. Eventually that ball ran into baulk after I scored a forcing loser, when appearances compelled me to leave my opponent a double baulk, a most distressing happening, as when I tried the

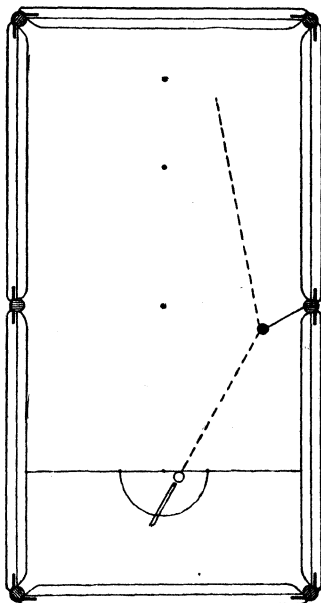
ricochet hazard I rather hoped I should miss it and leave the red over one top pocket and the white conveniently near the other. This illustrates another odd thing about billiards, which is that when you do not care very much what may happen, the odds favour the best result every time. But if you



3.—The stroke set out in this diagram supports my contention that side cannot be transmitted. To play the losing hazard from the position shown I impart the maximum of right-hand side to the cue-ball, but this does not affect the angle the red ball makes off the cushions it comes into contact with.



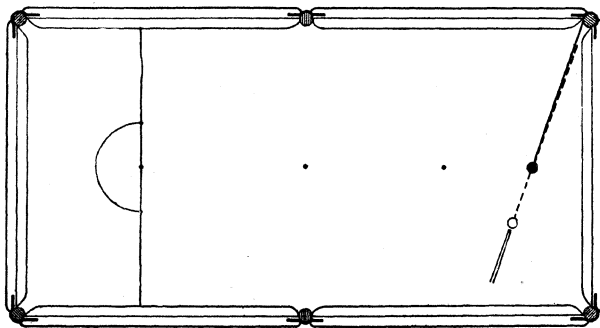
4.—This shot was played by an amateur in a match with me. It is an ambitious effort off three cushions, and the resulting cannon left the player with excellent position, the white being tapped nicely towards the middle pocket.



5.—Billiards is very easy in theory, and this diagram shows the first shot in a scoring sequence that looks very simple. From the position shown, pot the red in the middle pocket and leave the cue-ball as shown in Diagram No. 6.

are struggling for points in an important match, then it seems at times as if the harder you try, the more the balls run dead against you.

Personally I regard the transmitted side controversy as one of the oddest things in billiards. The question is whether or not side can be transmitted from the cue-ball to



6.—The second shot in the easy scoring sequence is played from this position. Pot the red and follow through with the cue-ball for the half-ball loser shown on Diagram No. 7.

the object-ball, and opinions differ so very widely that Willie Smith and myself hold directly opposite views on the matter. He says that side can be transmitted; I say it cannot. He says that he makes use of side transmission in actual play; I am certain that I have never dreamt of doing such a thing in my life. This is typical of the sharp difference of opinion on the matter among billiard players of all degrees of proficiency. It is far, indeed, from my present intention to enter into an exhaustive discussion on the subject, but such diversity of view on a matter which one would think could be settled almost off-hand seems to me so very singular that I am entitled to include it among the oddities of billiards.

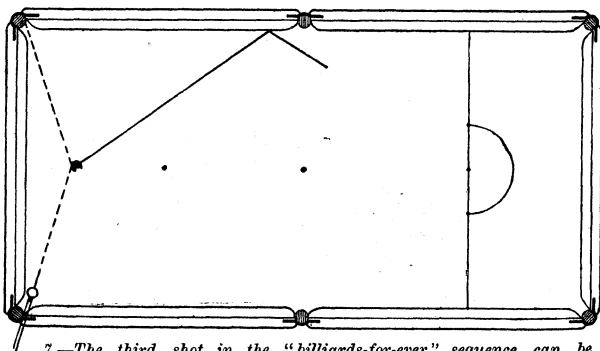
I also feel that I may instance one stroke which, to my mind, settles the argument. If I place the red ball just clear of the baulk-line and almost touching the side cushion, as shown in Diagram 3, and play the losing hazard into the nearest baulk pocket, I must strike the object-ball as fully as I dare without getting a kiss which would ruin my stroke, and I must strike my ball low while imparting as much right-hand side to it as I can put on a billiard ball. Now, if side is transmissible, this, surely, is the one shot to transmit it. The cue-ball,

almost humming with side, makes a thickish ball-to-ball contact with the red, thus giving it every opportunity to get a bearing to transmit side if the thing be possible. And if any side was transmitted, it would surely affect the angle the red ball makes off the cushions it comes into contact with. But it does nothing of the kind. If I strike

the red in the same place with correct side for the hazard, with incorrect side for it, or with no side at all, it makes no difference to the angle the red takes off the cushions, although, of course, I cannot score except by using side as described. But if I struck the red in different places in a rather useless endeavour to correct the direction of the cue-ball when it lacked the proper side, then I should bring the red off the cushions at varying angles. From this I might argue that side affected these angles; but the truth is that I strike the object-ball in different

places to allow for what side there may be on the cue-ball, and failure to recognise and admit this obvious fact accounts for the fallacy that side is transmitted. At least, I think it does, but, as I have stated, Willie Smith leads a host of those who differ from me on the point.

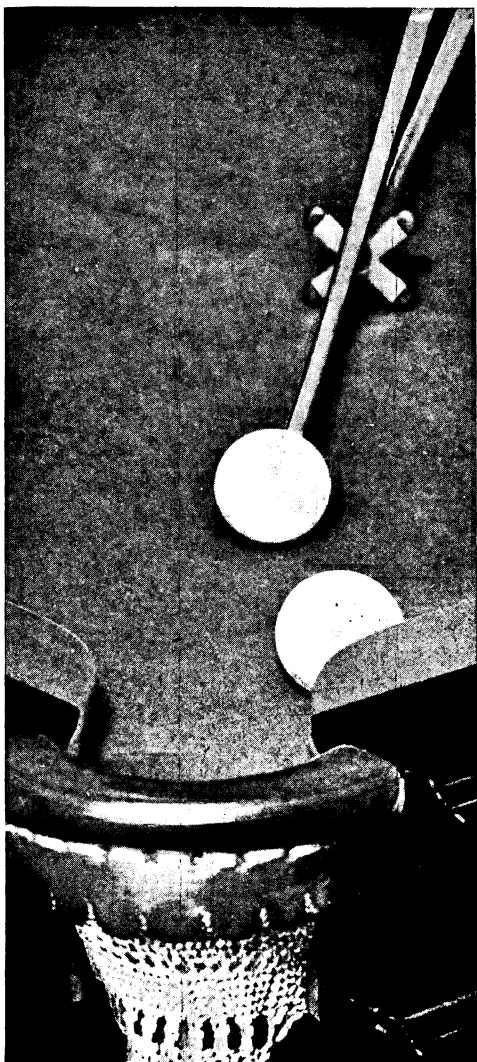
Diagram 4 shows an odd kind of shot an



7.—The third shot in the "billiards-for-ever" sequence can be played by any useful performer with the cue. The half-ball loser is played as shown in the diagram, and the red ball is back to the position set out in Diagram No. 5. In practice, however, these three shots are not so easy as they look.

amateur once made against me. My experience is that amateurs good enough to be the best players in their own locality usually display wonderful resource in individual stroke play. Where they fail is in ball control, as was shown in the sequel to the stroke now before us. This stroke is an ambitious effort off three cushions. It is a

hot stroke and a good one, is this cannon. Positionally it is the only stroke worth attempting. My amateur friend made it beautifully, just tapping the white up into lovely position for a little loser into the middle pocket. He had only to play this freely enough to take the white in and out of baulk to set up ideal break-building position, with his ball in hand. Instead, he played a wretched, poky kind of shot, which just dribbled the white a foot or so along

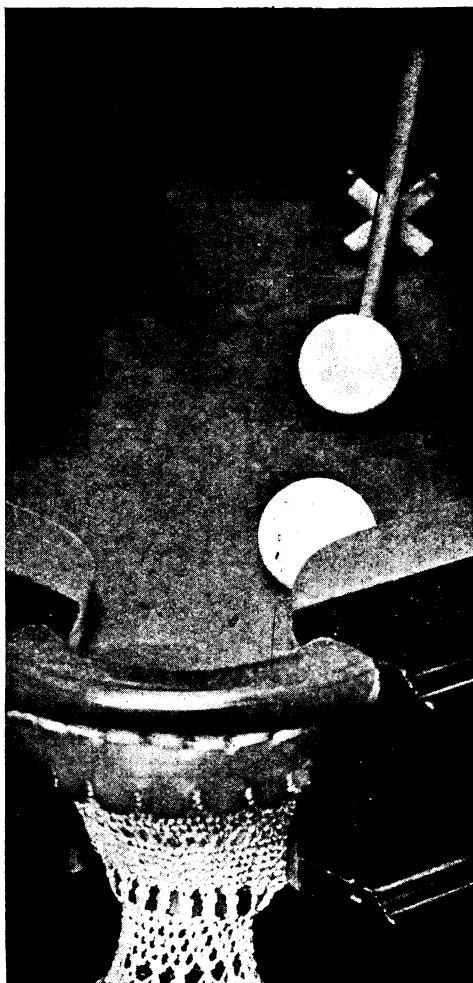


Photographs by]

POSITION "C."

[Sport & General.

Many billiard players are often puzzled to decide if it is possible to go in off a ball lying on the brink of a pocket by playing a very fine stroke. The above photograph illustrates the limit in this direction, and, with the balls placed exactly as shown, the object-white must be hit as thinly as it is possible to hit a billiard ball.



POSITION "D."

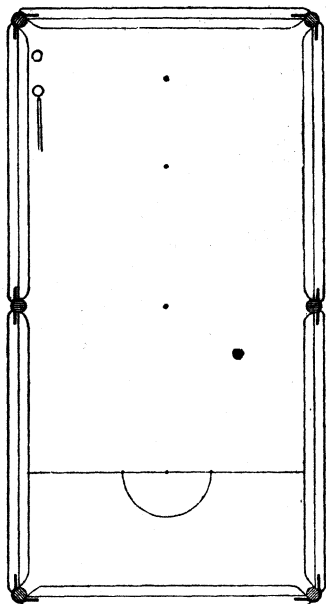
*In the above photograph the cue-ball has been moved slightly to the right of the position it occupied in Position C, but it makes all the difference to the shot to be played. Instead of being obliged to hit the white as finely as possible, you now have to strike it as fully as you can to enter the pocket. This stroke is quite easy, and neither side nor force is necessary.*

the side cushion below the middle pocket, and left nothing except a rather awkward cannon, a mighty poor return for such a magnificent opening shot.

Another curious thing about billiards is the ease with which you can score for ever—in theory. You can do it with but one ball on the table to play at—it is as simple as that. Begin by placing the red in convenient position over the middle pocket, as shown in Diagram 5. You pot the red to gain position off the top cushion as shown in Diagram 6, thus playing a plain-ball stroke of a very ordinary type. This leaves



you a straight pot the red at easy range, or something near enough to it for your purpose, which is to pot the red and run-through with the cue-ball to leave the familiar half-ball loser depicted in Diagram 7. Any useful hundred-upper can play this to take the red back to its original position, as in Diagram 5, when, of course, you merely repeat the three strokes. So you continue until you smash all red ball records, without ever playing one stroke of any difficulty, or even so much as putting an atom of side on your ball. That shows how easy it is to evolve a perpetual scoring movement—on paper. In practice, however, you will soon find that controlling the cue-ball is sur-



8.—This diagram shows the position of the balls for the "jump shot" illustrated in the photograph (Position E). The cue-ball and the object-white are too nearly in line with the top pocket for a run-through, and, as the red is in favourable position if I can get in off the white, the "jump shot" has to be played.

prisingly difficult, although each individual stroke is easy enough so far as scoring it counts for anything. It is most profitable practice to see how many points you can score off this sequence; but long before you make a thirty break off it, you will realise why it is that I cannot score as much as I please by exploiting it, which explains why I am philanthropic enough to give it to the world.

I now come to a couple of photographs which are both odd and useful. My other

photos showed how very little it takes to make all the difference to me when I am busy with a run of nursery cannons. The photographs now before us show something which makes as much difference to me as to any other player, of course, but depict something of interest to the rank and file of the billiard army, who are often puzzled to decide when it is just possible to go in off a ball by playing a very fine stroke. The photograph of Position C shows the limit in this direction. You cannot score a losing hazard by means of a fine ball-to-ball contact if you move the object-white ever so little towards the centre of the pocket opening. Even as it is, it needs a deft touch to just skim the white thinly enough for this loser. Really you have to hit that white as thinly as it is possible to hit a billiard ball, which is by no means an easy thing to do. Sometimes, no doubt, you have seen a ball just shiver as the cue-ball cannons in passing. Very well, that is the sort of contact you have to play for to be certain of scoring the loser now in view.

Now, if you move the cue-ball slightly to the right, to the position shown in the photograph of Position D, what a difference! Instead of being obliged to hit the white as fine as you can without missing it, you now have to strike it as fully as you can in order to send your ball into the pocket. The stroke is quite easy—neither side nor force is necessary. Strike your ball rather above its centre, let your cue work smoothly and freely, hit the white as full as you can, and the loser is an every-time certainty. Lack of confidence is the main difficulty the average cue-man has to contend with when faced by this stroke. He makes up his mind that it must be a tremendous business to score anything except pot the white, and when he is told merely to hit the white in the middle to send his own ball into the pocket, he feels there "must be a catch somewhere," and plays a nervous, jabby, lifeless stroke which could not score in a thousand years. If this sort of thing is avoided, the stroke becomes so absurdly easy that it is rather difficult to fail at it. Speaking for myself, I should feel just as sure of it as I should if playing to pot the white.

I cannot say this of the stroke shown in the photograph as Position E. This is a "jump shot," and is of additional interest because it shows a position where I should actually play this stroke in the most serious of billiards. Such positions are very rare. The red, I ought to explain, is away down

the table, where, as can be seen from Diagram 8, it offers every opportunity for a break if I can only get in off the white. This is not possible by means of a run-through—the balls are too nearly in line with the top pocket for that. So I play the “jump shot,” just swinging my cue as usual and making the tip brush the cloth immediately in front of my ball, as the photo shows very clearly. By playing like this, provided the cue is allowed to complete its swing without check or pause from the hand when the ball is struck, anybody can make a ball “jump,” and that without the slightest risk of cutting the cloth.

Still, the stroke looks very odd, but there is nothing in it so far as making the ball “jump” is concerned. Complications come thick and fast when accurate direction of the “jump” has to be ensured, and it has

to be played at such strength that the cue-ball hops just far enough over the white to graze the far side of that ball and run on into the pocket. In these respects the stroke demands such executorial ability that its successful accomplishment is more problematical than certain, even with the best of us. But I should reckon on making the “odd one” I am shaping at in the photograph, and actually did make it during one of my big breaks compiled against Willie Smith, who, very naturally, took no notice of it. He knew what I was playing for, could do it himself, and was quite unimpressed by the element of the spectacular in this “odd one.” This did not surprise me, as I never expect to make any stroke likely to disturb the ideal billiard temperament possessed by Willie Smith, my old and much-respected opponent.

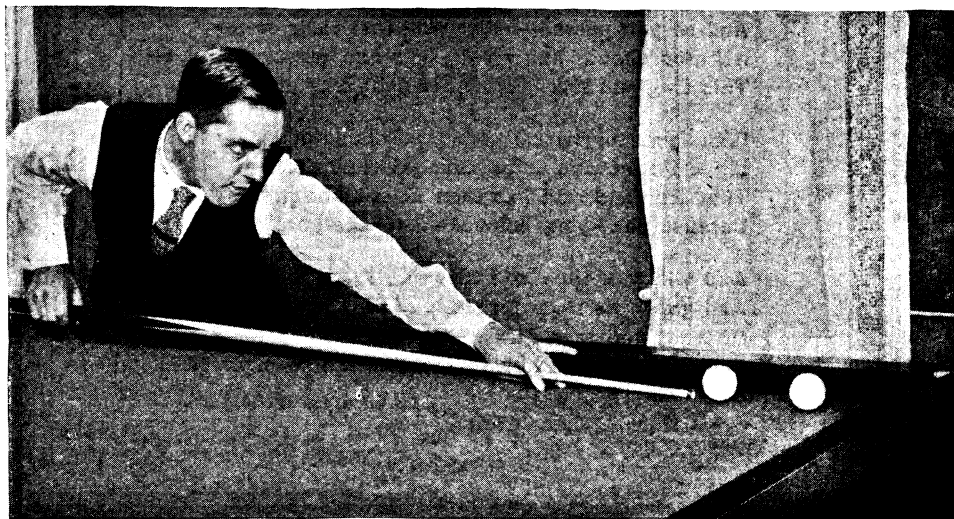


Photo by]

[Sport & General.

POSITION “E.”

*The “jump shot” is not often met with in billiards, but there are times when it has to be played. Diagram 8 shows a position where I should actually play the “jump shot” in the most serious of billiards. The “jump shot” is played by swinging the cue as usual, and making the tip brush the cloth immediately in front of the cue-ball, as shown in the above photograph. The cue must be allowed to complete its swing without check or pause when the ball is struck.*



# THE ANNIVERSARY

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

SO small it was, so infinitely small,  
The little coffin underneath its pall:  
A little coffin, comprehending all  
That makes this England infinitely great.

And there, in living silence so we stood;  
All we, in dumb, heart-breaking gratitude  
That you, our dead, had England's life renewed,  
And that between your hands had lain her fate.

And so you passed, a glory and a star;  
And so you passed—unknown—that near or far  
All men should know you, who and what you are:—  
This England's very self, her soul, her mate!

Could you forgive us, dear and silent one,  
If we forgot this thing that you had done—  
That England still has seen no set of sun  
Because you—you, beloved—kept the gate?

And will you then add this to all you wrought,  
And guard us from forgetting, till the thought  
Of what you were, unbidden and unsought,  
Comes quivering from God, and we hold straight?

CLAUDINE CURREY.

# THE FAMILY-IN-LAW

By G. B. STERN & GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

WHEN Guy Underwood lost his head over an actress, a pert little chit of the soubrette type, who made her name in the popular comedy "Cut on the Cross," when he married Pat Forrest, in fact, his family did not bewail his "low choice," draw themselves up, and scornfully refuse the common wench an honoured place at their oak table. On the contrary, the Underwoods were, in spite of their five generations in a pleasant Tudor country house, most modern in their outlook—a romping, hilarious, not very sensitive crowd—and Guy's selection of a wife pleased them mightily. "We're frightfully bucked!" they told the county. "Pretty useful, what, to have a first-rate comedy actress on the premises? Save us an awful lot in theatre tickets. She's bound to be a scream in the home circle. Ted saw 'Cut on the Cross' seven times, just because of her."

So the Underwoods—Vivien and Brenda, one of them engaged to be married to a subaltern in India; Ted, aged eighteen; Kit and Penny, twin school-girls of fifteen, and Gwynneth, step-mother to the whole bunch, a lively lady only a few years older than Vivien—all sat round expectantly, waiting for Guy's wife to be amusing.

They were particularly hopeful during the December house-party which gathered them together at Underwood Manor for the first time since the wedding. The family, at Pat's request, still lived on in their old home, though possession was actually the eldest son's. But Pat preferred a flat in Town. That was all right; that was "in character." The Underwoods understood very well all the delightfully vulgar ingredients that went to the making of an actress (and it really *was* decent of them to be so broad-minded about it!). Pat, they knew, would simply adore lights and applause, supper-parties and champagne, and the rowdiness of her own gang of friends. Pat would scream with laughter at the idea of her husband's stuffy relations

being "shocked" at her exploits. Well, but it took more than that to shock the enlightened Underwoods. An actress in the family was an exciting acquisition, that was all. "As long as it isn't Shakespeare," added Ted. "Or Repertory: Ibsen and Shaw and Pirandello and that lot," declared Brenda. "Or Restoration," exclaimed Gwynneth. No reasonable stepmother-in-law could complain of a step-daughter-in-law out of "Cut on the Cross."

But—and there was no denying it now, after Pat had been at the Manor for twelve days already—the celebrity was proving a disappointment, a wash-out, a dud. Not that, reversing the obvious, she startled her family-in-law by proving to be, off the stage, a type of amazingly distinguished, gracious young womanhood, of peerless breeding and a most marvellous seat when riding to hounds. She was, on the contrary, rather common. Rather. Not excessively. That was the whole trouble. She did not amuse them. She was not horribly vulgar, nor alarmingly a child of Nature. Never once had she said anything that approached the wit, the subtle daring, of some of her lines in "Cut on the Cross." Shy? Well, perhaps a little bit shy of Guy's people at first, but that did not last long. But where were the "comic stunts" that would have justified Guy in his selection of a wife? If a man labelled "conjurer" enters with a top-hat, you have a legitimate grievance should he fail instantly to produce rabbits from it. Pat produced no rabbits.

The Underwoods were a frank family, and thought it wrong to conceal their feelings. Thus Pat had no difficulty in surmising that, as a form of sensational entertainment in the home circle, she was being looked upon as a bad investment. Funny, because she used to be so good in her gag-and-patter scenes with Lamb Luton, the comedian. Perhaps she might still, and at any moment, surprise them. "With that hair," asserted Viv, "look out for buried squalls!" And, indeed, Pat's

shingle was, according to Kit and Penny, a pretty useful shade of flame.

One snowy evening in mid-December—which, you must admit, is a promising phrase!—a hundred mysterious lights might have been seen flashing between the elms of the avenue that led from the lodge to the door of the Manor. The lights proved to be, in fact, the head-lights of Guy's car, spasmodically shut off by the close formation of tree trunks, and ever again reappearing. He had been spending a couple of days in London on necessary business. Pat had remained, listlessly acquiescent, with her family-in-law.

"I say, Gwyn!" This was a couple of hours later, round the huge brick fireplace. The heir's arrival, described with that portentous reference to the flashing head-lights, was really only an incidental. Nor was he, indeed, the heir, having already inherited. "I say, Gwyn, I've invited a fellow I used to know, but hadn't met for a long time till last night, down here for Christmas. Hope you don't mind. Chap called Carew—Richard Spurnville Carew."

"Spurnville!" jeered Penny.

"He swanks that it's a corruption of the ancient Cromwellian name of Spurn-the-devil!" explained Guy, and his two young sisters became helpless with laughter. "He's an eccentric, vagabonding sort of beggar. Thought he'd brighten up the whole show," continued Guy, it may be a shade tactlessly, for Viv and Brenda both glanced at Pat, who hitherto had so emphatically failed to brighten the whole show.

"What's eccentric about him? D'you mean he wears freak clothes and plays the ukalele?"

"Heavens, no! Can't mind his own business, that's all. But you wouldn't believe the amount of mess one fellow not minding his own business can make, if he's conscientious about it. Carew wanders about and understudies Providence. Sees a pie, jabs his finger in it. Sometimes it agrees with the pie, and often it doesn't!"

"I'd hate to be the pie," remarked Pat in a depressed voice.

Guy told a trio of diverting anecdotes in defence of his friend's methods as benevolent Providence. Not highly successful anecdotes. In one of them, and by direct consequence of his well-meant interference, a lady lost all her hair and her husband's love; in another the Meddler's "bag" was merely a law suit followed by a suicide; while in the third, and least catastrophic,

two people were unhappily brought together who were peacefully happy only when apart.

"Strange sense of humour you've developed, old son," said Brenda, his favourite sister, lazily. "You hardly seem able to speak for your rich and hearty chucklings; but I should call your pal a criminal lunatic and a public danger. What d'you say, Viv?"

Vivien cried indignantly: "I'd like to teach the man a lesson!"

From one member of the clan to another, a stir ran through the Underwood blood and quickened it.

"He deserves to be made an utter fool of!"

"Teach him not to hanky-panky with other people's affairs!"

"I say, if he's coming here——"

"Wouldn't it be rather sport——"

"Yes, look here, can't we——"

"Get something ready for him?" murmured Guy, with his boots sprawling dangerously near to the blazing logs. "I don't mind. A leg like Carew's *asks* to be pulled."

"After all"—Ted capped the rising enthusiasm for the notion—"we've got Pat here, all handy!"

They settled down contentedly to fake a really tempting, situation, and one irresistible to a heaven-born meddler. After about half an hour of squabbling, Kit said:

"Tell him the ghost of Queen Elizabeth walks our left wing, where she once slept, and ask him to ex-ex-exercise it. Pat's got the right colour hair—she can be the ghost!"

"I'm not just dying to be exercised," protested Pat, who was not at all sure of the meaning of the word, but to whom it sounded too energetic to be pleasant.

Guy threw out a reassuring arm in protection of her laziness, and informed the party that if anyone were going to exorcise his wife, he'd do it himself. "But Kit's given me a notion, with her prattle of red hair and sleeping queens. Wait! No, don't talk, any of you. It's coming—slowly. I can just spot it rising over the horizon. The Birth of a Notion—our new historical five-reel film. None of you get it before I do, or I shall be seriously hurt! Stop talking! Tell me all that all of you know about Queen Elizabeth. Go on! It might help. No dates, though; they're bad for me—my last doctor said so."

A bewildering hailstorm of information,

mostly inaccurate, mostly supplied by Ted and the twins, pattered about his ears.

"She—she was Jane Seymour's daughter, and she said 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!' when a medal was struck at Waterloo."

"No, she wasn't—didn't. She was the Vermin Queen, and wouldn't marry the King of Spain because he had a beard, so she told Drake to singe it, and Drake did!"

"She had three hundred and sixty-five dresses in her wardrobe, one for every day of the year."

"She was in love with the Earl of Leicester, and once stayed in this very house, only he preferred Mary Queen of Scots, so Elizabeth had her beheaded on Tower Hill!"

"She had red hair, and encouraged Shakespeare in his follies, and was awfully keen on loot and the Established Church, and reigned for sixty years, and begged pardon for being such an unconscious-stricken time a-dying. Oh, no, that was James the First!"

"She was most awfully vain, and didn't like the name Elizabeth because it was so common to be called Liz or Bess, so she made all her courtiers and admirals write poetry about her and call her Gloriana and Belphebe, which was swank."

"She wore stomachers."

"She had tiny feet."

"Henry the Eighth had her put in prison when she was a princess, to pay her out for not being a son."

"She——"

"Thank you," said their step-mother, lulling the tumult. "Guy has now, I am sure, a comprehensive and sharply-defined view of English history in the sixteenth century A.D. Kit and Penny, you're a couple of disgraces, and I'll have the pleasure of writing to your head-mistress to-morrow, asking her to put you on to an extra course next term!"

"Guy," Penny suggested, breathless but vindictive, "what about telling your pal, when he comes, that we suffer from a cruel step-mother who oppresses us all, but specially the youngest twin, to whom has been left Underwood Manor by will, which the step-mother covets, but suggest that Mr. Spurnthede devil Carew pretends to be most frightfully in love with her, and runs away with her after a false marriage, with a clergyman who shall be Ted dressed up, and then heartlessly, at our 'stigation, abandons her to poignant wishings that she had

been a kinder step-mother to the poor little rich girl——"

"Shut up!" roared Guy. "How can I tell you my idea while you jabber so? This is it. I put together Pat's red hair, and our bed that Queen Elizabeth slept in, added them up, and Penny's information about the three hundred and sixty-five dresses gave this bright boy the rest. Listen . . ."

When Guy had finished, the Underwoods looked at each other doubtfully—doubtfully and yet fascinated, for the rich streak of nonsense that underlay his somewhat limited vernacular, glowing through wherever his speech was rent and jagged, could not but appeal to their united sense of high-spirited drama.

"It's a glorious part for Pat," pronounced Viv at last. "I wish *my* hair—— But still, she is a pro, and ought to do it jolly well."

"Pay him out for all the harm he's done, if she pulls it off!" quoth Ted.

"Oh, she'll pull it off!" Guy's step-mother smiled encouragingly upon the family soubrette. "What do you suppose they gave her fifty pounds a week for in 'Cut on the Cross'?"

Pat understood that she was to be given another chance with the Underwoods.

\* \* \* \* \*

Richard Spurnville Carew possessed, above all things, the art of getting at once intimate with people of all manners, sorts, and ages. Thus he was not surprised when, having been for only two days a guest at Underwood Manor, five people had already confided in him the trouble pressing most heavily upon each Underwood heart, fervently begging him to think of something, do something, to ease the situation. "Because lots of people would think it all so mad and impossible, but *you* seem to understand so well, and poor old Guy will be ruined if this goes on!"

"It is quite mad, and not in the least impossible," the Meddler separately assured Viv, Brenda, Ted, Kit, and Mrs. Gwynneth Underwood. (They had all agreed beforehand that Penny had better be eliminated from those to be trusted with a confidential-outburst scene. Penny was liable to over-act.)

Carew was observant, and had already noted, as a quaint and striking fact in this new household of his acquaintance, that Guy Underwood's wife never let herself be

seen more than once wearing the same garment, and that her whole toilet underwent bewitching and obviously expensive transformations several times a day. The other members of the family, as though to counterbalance such sartorial vanity, were all extremely shabby. Time, as it went on, revealed that they only possessed about one day dress and one evening dress apiece, contrasting vividly with Pat's magnificence. "We want to save poor old Guy all we can; obsessions grow on people. And she spends much more on dress already than he can afford. He's beginning to look so old and worried. No, you wouldn't notice, Mr. Carew—you've not met him for years, have you?—but we who know our Guy so well——"

"Obsessions can be shattered," said the Happy Meddler to Viv, Brenda, Ted, Kit, and Mrs. Gwynneth Underwood. To Brenda he had said "uprooted" instead of "shattered." But the principle was the same. It was almost unbelievably absurd that Pat Underwood should continue to be obsessed with the idea that she was a reincarnation of Queen Elizabeth, even though she had the same type of red hair and pale chin-pointed face, and even though she had been put to sleep, when she first came down to stay with them as Guy's *fiancée*, in the identical room where the Queen had slept, it was said, during those poignant nights after Leicester, for no known reason, had ceased to love her. Pat, so Viv, Brenda, Ted, Kit, and Gwynneth had informed Carew, had got it somehow into her head that Leicester had on one occasion encountered Elizabeth looking a sheer dowl, striving to impress his courtier's diffidence as a woman like other women, instead of as richly-apparelled majesty. And he had received a shock; his passion had suffered a reaction plain enough to the Queen.

"So he just ejaculated 'My feathered hat!' and showed her a clean pair of heels!" Ted gabbled on, following Guy's previous instructions. "And poor old Queen Bess never got over it, and started ordering in three hundred and sixty-five dresses a year, to be on the safe side next time. That's the jolly old legend, anyway"—Carew nodded his head in confirmation—"and that's why my sister-in-law changes her dress about nine times a day, without regard for the shekels. Thinks, in a mizzy-muzzy sort of fashion—I dunno how people argue things out with themselves when

they've got delusions—that if she should bark her shins at any moment against Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, or his modern reincarnation or what-not, that she's only got to be prepared all in her gladdest rags, and they'll both live happy ever after. Taking no risks, you see! Up to Town in the old 'bus, and order another fourteen Paris models, just to last out the fortnight. And Guy and the girls going about looking like charwomen! And poor old Guy—I tell you, it does make me sick! I've told 'em to take her to a doctor, but Gwyn says it 'ud be a bit hard to explain, and that no doctor would prescribe a dose hefty enough to make an obstinate patient think she's not Queen Elizabeth! Look here, can't *you* do something?"

They all said "Can't *you* do something?" except Kit, who murmured wistfully: "Oh, can't *you* do something?" And it was to Kit that the Happy Meddler first declared his helpful inspiration, bidding her pass it on to the other Underwoods: "What can't be endured must be cured, Kit! Any copybook will tell you that. Now, you can't shatter a delusion with a bludgeon. I propose a subtle counter-delusion. To-morrow night, when you're all sitting round in the hall, especially Pat, I rush down the stairs, pale and perplexed, stammering that I've been visited by a wraith, an elegant courtier of the Tudor period, who has given me a message for someone whom he calls 'the Queen.' I haven't quite got the message translated into the language of the period yet, but it is to the soothing effect that there has been a grievous misunderstanding, and that she's not to be an extravagant puss any longer; for the more she overdresses, the more difficult it is for him to achieve their spiritual union on ye hither side of whereunto . . . signed, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. There you are, Kit!"—triumphantly. "I, of course, don't at all realise the immense significance of such a message, but probably Pat will register strong emotion, and in the future never require more than thirty pounds per annum for her dress allowance, and that includes Christmas presents for the servants!"

Kit hastened to report to the other Underwoods that an important development of the plot for the humiliation of a Happy Meddler must be instantly unfolded, and council taken. Thereupon they all went about fetching each other, and then sending each other for the others who were

not there, till in an hour or two all were safely assembled in the billiard room.

"You may give tongue, Kit!"

And:

"Good!" exclaimed Guy, when she had finished. "He's tumbled into the hole we've dug for him. Now he's got to be shown that it is a hole." His brother

child. Time of delivery, to-morrow night. Scene, the hall of Underwood Manor. Assembled, *omnes*. Meaning, the Whole Boiling. You can wear Viv's green thing from Molyneux, if you like—he hasn't seen you in that yet!"

Vivien Underwood sighed. "I shall be glad to reclaim my own clothes again," she

"I don't care . . . I'd have done it, for Guy," Pat went on fiercely, to hide the shake of a sob in her throat . . . 'But I can't.'"



and sisters, wife and step-mother, remained respectfully silent, for they appreciated that Guy's was the mind that had evolved and was now controlling their hilarious stunt. "Pat, this is where *you* come in."

"Thought I'd come in already," murmured Pat.

"Just one pregnant curtain line, my

remarked, "so will Gwyn and Brenda. These most succulent of all our garments that we've all three had to lend Pat, in the interests of pure psychology— However, the climax ought to be worth it. Go on, Guy."

"It's quite simple, really. Enter Carew with a rush, and really fancying himself in



the part of universal confidant, barks out his message amid lowered lights, and looks for Pat, healed of her expensive delusion, to fall swooning into the arms of her all-but-ruined husband, who, passing a hand across his carking brow—

"You mean 'corking,' don't you?" suggested Ted.

"I mean 'carking,' little brother. All carked with carking care, if that enlightens you? He murmurs 'Thank Heaven, I haven't yet overdrawn my overdraft!' wringing Richard Carew heartily by the other hand. That's what R. Spurnville Carew will expect. But not a bit of it! Here is where our *dénouement* comes in."

"Do wait a minute!" cried Penny. "I'm getting so muddled. We began—didn't we?—by having a plot, and now he's got a plot inside that, and now we're putting another plot inside that—No, that's inside out. Our first one was the smallest, and he put a bigger one outside it, and now we're going to put them both inside a bigger one still, and—does it end there?"

"Chinese boxes," quoth Ted. "Also Euclid: 'the whole is greater than the part.' Go ahead, Guy. I'll draw a few diagrams for Penny later on."

"His speech is followed by an astonished silence, as we all drop away audibly from any knowledge or memory of having abetted him up to this most embarrassing moment. He is left suspended, as it were. Then, in that inimitable slow and clear-cut twang, seemingly uneducated and innocent of guile, which has made Pat famous through seven continents, she will demand of him, all wide-eyed:

"'Who is Lord Leicester?'"

\* \* \* \* \*

Pat remained on the fender seat, gravely contemplating the toe of her left shoe. She understood that she was to be given this one more chance of winning the favour of her family-in-law. Was Guy getting bored with her, too? She nodded, answering herself: Yes, he was. The Underwoods—they were that curious phenomenon she had often, in her past, wondered about: the playgoing public. In their home, and out of it, they sought amusement. Wherever they were amused, they gave full marks. Otherwise, thumbs down. . . . "Who is Lord Leicester?"

They were preparing to be richly amused to-morrow night! "It depends on Pat!"

Pat remained behind on the fender seat, gravely contemplating the toe of her left

shoe. Yet presently she seemed to have come to a decision. Her impudent, three-cornered little face, in its setting of flame, was shadowed with an even deeper sadness, but the troubled, questioning frown had gone from between her eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Well met, honest—gentleman, I was going to say, from force of habit!" cried Richard Spurnville Carew, on coming face to face, the next day, with Pat Underwood in the neighbouring beechwood. Green satin, pale green satin, were the slim tree trunks. The winter's sun slid delicately through the bare branches on to leaves that winds had shaken down, and winds had shaken into a carpet of rich sodden purple, where the foot might walk softly. It was Arden in winter—Tudor England—and here was Tudor's Queen herself, leaning against a tree trunk, and wearing yet another of her three hundred and sixty-five garments. Heavens! How many changes did the wench possess? Carew smiled at his unlooked-for encounter with Guy Underwood's expensively-deluded wife, and cheerily hailed her in language of that period into which, for a moment, he felt he had dropped.

"You've hit it in one," replied Pat coolly, her hands clasped behind her, her chin defiantly tilted, though Carew was intangibly made aware that the defiance was not for him. "I am honest, and I hope I'm going to behave like a gentleman, though it looks like whatever I did I'd be letting down someone."

"Quite," he agreed. "One usually is. Even the noble child of the lighthouse-keeper, who refused to stand upon the Family Bible in order to light the ship to safety through the stormy seas, was letting down a sailor or two. The infinite amount of stitches in this badly-worked sampler which we call Life—"

"Sit down," said Pat curtly. "The leaves aren't wet. You make me nervous, towering above me."

"I was not towering. And the leaves, pardon me, are so wet that they may seem dry to you, as icy water seems stinging hot on the bare flesh. However"—he placed his lean tweed-clad length gingerly on the ground at the foot of the tree—" 'Tis but one cast away, and so, come Death!"—As You Like It, Act III, Scene IV: Another Part of the Forest . . . and very like the part we first came to, except that they've moved a tree trunk L.U.E. to R.U.E. . . . Don't you get a sort of Elizabeth's England

atmosphere in the woods near Underwood Manor?" He gazed straight before him, waiting. He had given her a cue, if she wanted to talk about—Lord Leicester, for instance?

"No, I don't. And if you're hinting at my obsession, as they call it, that I'm Good Queen Bess myself, only sent home three hundred years late from the wash—well, that's all my eye. They've been pulling your leg. And they're going to pull it some more, only I'm putting you wise to the whole stunt." And then, in rapid, nervous slang, she told him about the plot that the Underwoods had constructed for his ultimate humiliation, and exactly how it was dated to reach its climax that very evening.

The Happy Meddler listened without a single interruption. When she had finished, he asked briefly, so that she could not tell just how mortified he was: "What have they got against me? What are they doing it for?"

"Fun," replied Pat, scorn in her pronouncement of the monosyllable. "The Underwood family *are* like that. They want to be amused all the time. That's why I've proved such a dud, from their point of view. When Guy and me first got engaged, I was afraid his family'd cut up rough a bit—not so badly as they used to, fifty years ago, but just that they'd rather I didn't behave like a no-class actress once I was married to Guy, nor mention it much to the neighbours, but learn soon how to be a lady! That's the style of welcome I expected from them, and fairly reasonable, too. But, bless your boots, they're just the other way! Can't have too much of the song an' dance, and the more outrageous the better . . . Free seats at the theatre! I tell you, they were just longing to show off how shocked they wouldn't be, and how broad-minded and tolerant we are, these days. My mother—she was an actress, too—she'd have been the one to be shocked the way they expect you, once you've retired, to play the hired buffoon all the time. I don't care . . . I'd have done it, for Guy," Pat went on fiercely, to hide the shake of a sob in her throat, "so as not to disappoint him. He was keen as mustard for me to go down well with his people. But I can't—I'm no blessed good at impromptoo. Never was. Never gagged to get a laugh in my life. Give me my lines and I can act, and do pretty well for myself, too, in the profession. Ever see me in

'Cut on the Cross'? But I hoped to be let alone now I'm married, and take it easy and be myself. And they're bored with me. All my family-in-law are. And I believe Guy's getting bored with me, too." She made no attempt now to hide her despondency, but slid down into a disconsolate little heap on the leaves beside Carew. Still without looking at her, he stretched out a hand in her direction:

"Madam Mountebank . . ." he murmured. "What a shame!"

"Oh, I'm all right *now*," Pat assured him, but her laugh still had a tremor in it. "I'm right down popular *now*! They supplied me with a copy of the part, and with my wardrobe, complete."

"And how popular will you be after to-night, when they hear that you've given the whole show away, and that I'm not to be publicly fooled, after all?"

Pat fidgeted uneasily with a handful of dead leaves. "Can't be helped"—sullenly.

"*Why* did you tell me—Madam Mountebank? You needn't have, you know. After all, I'm a stranger, and I was preparing, within my own limited knowledge of the joke, to spoof *you* over that message from Lord Leicester. Why didn't you carry it through, deliver your star line, and get your applause?"

She flashed out: "It's not decent to rag a guest, whatever he's done. They—they can't have remembered. No sportsman would play a Number-four-town trick like that on a guest."

The Happy Meddler looked at her and smiled. He had rather a nice smile. It expressed at this moment the same homage for the little red-headed "hired buffoon," and her principles of fine old English hospitality, as a fervent pressure of his lips upon her hand would have done, or a richly brodered cloak flung for her small feet to tread upon over the mud. But he spoke no word of this silent salute, realising how the modern spirit of modern youth is terrified for its reputation; supposing—dreadful thought!—supposing anyone should think her "good" or "noble," or, worst of all, "self-sacrificing"!

"Besides," Pat chattered on, grateful to him for her escape, "all this mincing about in Viv's best clothes, and Brenda's and Gwyn's as well as my own, changing fifty-two times a day, and looking all far-away and stricken-Queen-ish and 'he cometh not'—it's much too wearing for a born idler to keep up. Too like work. That's the

worst of my blooming family-in-law; always on at me to act—act—act, for no better reason than that I was an actress." And: "I want to be lazy," she trolled out, as from the throat of a very young blackbird.

"I want to creep  
In that deep  
Tangled wild wood,  
Counting sheep  
As I sleep,  
Like a child would!"

I love that drowsy bit of the song. Guy—Guy and me used to warble it together, he all out of tune. No one sings in as many different keys as Guy, once he gets started. It's a gift. I used to rock with laughing at him."

Used to! Used to! Carew noticed the piteous past tense which unconsciously she used. "Guy's getting bored with me, too," she had said before.

"I've played buffoon myself so often that I hardly notice it any more," he broke abruptly into her humming of the song, which her young husband had made into a humorously tender memory to her by his singing of it "all out of tune." "Look here, child, to-night you're going to make a success of that scene with me, just as though I had been told nothing about it; a success according to Underwood standards. I'll play up to you, and we'll give them what they want, between us; they'll see once and for all what you can do in your own line of greatness, and then you can retire into permanent laziness. Miss Pat Forrest resting. Not at liberty to take any part whatever. Occupation, counting sheep. Is that all right?"

"It's quite too marvellously generous of you," Pat said, a little bit breathless. "But—it means—it means making an utter fool of you, roasting you in front of them all. Oh, not really, but they'll think so always, and that's just as bad."

"Is it? What about my pride as an artist? Exit Richard Spurnville Carew and suit-case, tingling with mortification, into the night. . . . You'll hear me tingle just before the front door bangs. 'And that'll teach him'—chorus from your family-in-law—'not to interfere in matters that don't concern him!' . . . Perhaps, after all, Pat, it's a lesson I deserved. The Underwoods meant to be reformers. I've been fatally near, once or twice, to landing my victims into a worse hole than the one I've tried to fish them out of."

But she was not listening. "It was

Guy's plot. He'd be frightfully fed up with me if he heard I let him down."

"He needn't hear. You've got your curtain line. All you need do is to speak it to-night. I'll supply all cues, entrances, exits and drama, according to schedule, down to the last sob in the throat, bowed head, knees quivering with wounded pride, and farewell to Underwood Manor. Great sport for the initiated audience. You'll simply romp into popularity with your obstreperous family-in-law. And—you risked that popularity a little while ago, didn't you, honest gentleman?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Pat Underwood was standing at the window of her room, late that night, listening to the throb of a motor-car that grew fainter and fainter down the avenue. The Underwoods' guest was returning to Town. The Underwoods' buffoon had begged leave, haughtily, to depart that same evening. He had pleaded urgent business in London. But, of course, no one expected him to stop on, after the absurd figure he had cut. The family were jubilant over the success of their plot for teaching a meddler his place. And Pat—Pat had been wonderful! The way she had drawled it out, "Who *is* Lord Leicester?" tumbling him simply flat in confusion, believing, as he had, in her fantastic obsession of herself as a Queen still mourning for her lover, Robert Dudley. Oh, it had been—*rich*! They were clamorous with delight over the actress in their midst, and wholly unrepentant as far as Carew was concerned. The Underwoods never repented.

Pat's lip curled a little scornfully in recollection. But Guy—Guy was frightfully bucked, of course. Guy had so wanted his family to like and appreciate her, and to-night his wish had been wholly gratified. Yes, only . . .

Her husband strode up behind her and put his hands on her shoulders. "I want to kiss you, Pat."

"And I don't want to kiss you!"—coldly.

Yet she had been aching for this reconciliation between them, after the period of what had seemed, to her, his passion grown listless.

"Why, what on earth——"

She flared out on him, more or less in the same words she had used to Carew, down in the beechwood: "No sportsman would first rag a guest, as you've done, roast him in front of everybody, and then let him leave the house like this! Yes, and it was

you who had invited him, too, and you who made up the whole plot! Oh, can't you see? It's—it's letting down Underwood Manor!"

But her husband, laughing, had coolly drawn his desired kiss from her lips, between one outburst of rage and the next. He had managed to kiss her just as she went on to say:

"All very well for me, Guy; my sort aren't supposed to know any better, are they? Gutter-urchins, and all that! But *you*, you're head of the family, and I can't help wishing——"

"Darling goose," said Guy Underwood tenderly, "d'you really suppose *I* had the

brains to work out all the Elizabeth-and-Leicester business which I brought back from London with me? All that I had the brains to see was that you were unhappy at not going down well with Viv and Gwynneth and Ted and all of 'em. It bothered me no end. And when I ran across old Carew again—hadn't seen him for years—I simply plumped it all out. He's that kind of fellow. And then he made up the whole roastin' stunt against himself, from beginning to end, even down to what lies I should tell about him to put the family's back up. All to give you a chance to get right with 'em, Pat! And it went well, didn't it?"

*A further episode from the career of "The Happy Meddler" will appear in the next number.*

## THE LEAF DANCE.

**L**IKE the rustle of a silken gown,  
Like the stepping of a hundred shoon,  
When the wind at dusk shakes the wood and wakes  
Flute, fiddle, and bassoon,  
The brown leaves follow me o'er holt and hollow,  
And hark ye, they are following still:  
"Come, dance with us around, on the green and grassy ground,  
And trip it on the heather hill!"

Like the patt'ring of a flock of sheep  
Fast running to their fold,  
All as the wind's broom sweeps the heap  
Of leaves across the wold.  
Or ever I close my door,  
Outside they wheel and swing:  
"Come, fling it with us all in the merry, merry brawl,  
And trip it round the meadow ring!"

Like the rustle of my Lady's gown,  
And her shoes soft tapping, hear I yet,  
When the wind at dusk shakes the wood and wakes  
Flute, fiddle, and castanet,  
The red leaves follow me o'er holt and hollow,  
Or ever the red moon has set:  
"Come, tread with us a pass on the heather and the grass,  
And pace with us a minuet!"

\* \* \* \*

Or ever I sink to sleep,  
And in dreams I shall hear them still:  
"Come, dance with us around on the green and grassy ground,  
And trip it on the heather hill!"

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

# PLAYING THE GAME

By DENIS MACKAIL

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

**D**OUBTLESS you have a friend with a car. In the fanciful manner of present-day motorists he probably calls it either a "bus" or a "lorry"; but to you it seems a very enviable possession, with its richly-upholstered seats, its mysterious glittering taps and handles, its subtle scent of oil, rubber, and petrol, its general air of luxury and romance. When he offers to take you for a drive in it, you accept unhesitatingly. "I should love it," you say, with simple gratitude. "Thanks awfully."

"To-morrow evening suit you?" he asks.

"Splendid!" you reply, forgetting all about your promise to dine out early with your friends in St. John's Wood. By the time that you remember them, the bargain has been struck; and as it seems impossible to risk offending a man with a car of his own, you ring them up and arrange that they shall come to you one night next week instead. This will unquestionably be more expensive, but then aren't you getting a free ride—to nowhere in particular—for nothing? Of course you are.

To-morrow evening arrives, as is its habit.

"Where shall we go?" asks your rich acquaintance.

"Oh, anywhere," you say cheerfully. "Leave it to you."

He frowns meditatively. You realise that his remarkable brain holds not only a complete knowledge of the meaning of all those dials and gadgets on the dashboard, but also carries an entire plan of the fifteen different ways of leaving London. It is painful to find yourself admiring as well as envying a man whose wealth is, you are convinced, so largely a matter of accident; but there is no alternative. Of course, if you had a car yourself, you'd soon pick it all up; but—

"Well," he breaks in suddenly, "I know a little place where they give you quite a good dinner. The only trouble is that I never had time to get to the bank to-day."

It's an odd thing that rich people hardly ever do have time to get to the bank. Perhaps that is how they become rich.

"Oh, that's all right," you hear yourself answering. "I cashed a cheque this morning myself. So——"

"Good," he interrupts. "Then I can promise you a dinner that you won't forget in a hurry."

Will he forget it, though? For shame! Didn't he tell you last night that his garage bill alone came to twenty pounds a month? What more do you expect him to do for you?

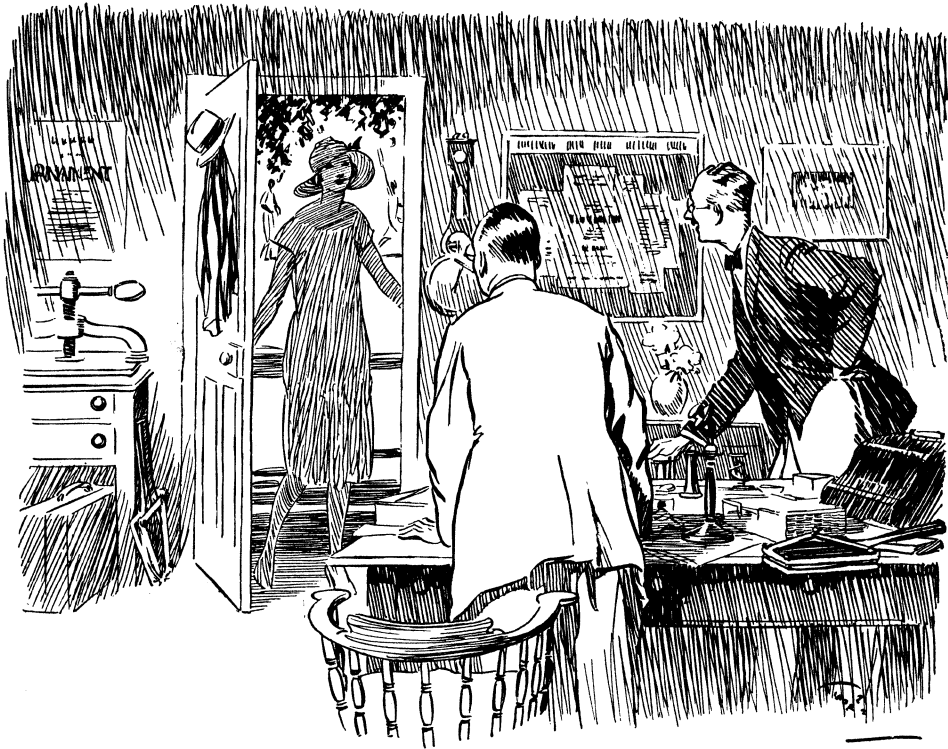
"Splendid!" you remark once more. He fiddles with the dashboard, kicks something with his foot, wrenches at something else with his hand, toots magnificently on his horn, and the monster leaps ahead. You're off.

It is a little alarming just at first. The car seems so much wider and more restive than the taxis to which you are accustomed; it swishes so daringly round corners and stops so abruptly in traffic blocks. But the rigid grip with which you have seized the top of the near-side door presently relaxes. It's rather fun, once the first feeling of anxiety dies down, to go speeding along like this. You catch sight of your reflection in a shop window. Somehow or other it encourages you. You begin wondering whether the people on the pavements think that the car is your own. You wouldn't be surprised if some of them did.

It would be a good idea to fling out a lordly arm at the next corner, to show how familiar you are with this means of transport. Better not, though. These signals are a bit tricky, and it might be awkward if you were misunderstood.

You are on the tram-lines now, hitting it up like one o'clock. Strange, how naturally these sporting expressions come into your— Whew! That was a near thing.

Your friend turns to you indignantly. "These tram-drivers," he says, "ought to be shot! If the Government knew what



“Which of you is the secretary?”

they were about, the whole system would be scrapped to-morrow.”

You agree warmly. Those trams have saved you many a long tramp in the past, and will do so again in the future, but for the moment you are a motorist. To blazes, then, with all tramways.

To blazes also with the omnibuses, the market carts, the bicyclists, the pedestrians and the children—with everything, in short, which impedes for an instant your mad career towards your unknown destination. Toot, toot! Get out of the way, you blighter! Ah, *that* gave him a fright!

You look back contemptuously. The blighter is actually having the insolence to shake his fist. You laugh, forget about him, and turn gloatingly to the speedometer needle.

The tram lines have dwindled to a single track now, and presently even this peters out. Another quarter of a mile, and you swing suddenly off to the right.

“Short cut?” you ask knowingly.

Your companion nods. “We can let her out a bit here,” he adds, and proceeds to do so.

The roads through which you are now dashing are full of detached and semi-detached houses, with little front gardens,

each boasting a diminutive drive. Red brick walls, slate roofs, glimpses of deck chairs on green lawns, trees, aerials, geraniums, deserted two-seaters standing in the gutter. On the gravel side-walks all the young men—and there are a lot of them—are hatless, dressed in white flannel trousers and blue blazers with brass buttons. All the young women—and there are still more of these—are wearing bandeaux, cotton frocks, white shoes and stockings. Both sexes carry tennis rackets.

Seen from your swift-moving chariot, it is all rather attractive—the neat houses and gardens; the healthy-looking athletes coming and going from their favourite sport; the long, clean, slightly-curving roads. It is all so fresh, so countrified in a way, and yet with none of the mournful desolation of the real country. It does not, for instance, suggest that in the winter-time it would be necessary to cut one’s throat.

You turn to your friend for information. “I say,” you shout, “do you know what this place is called?”

“Eh?” He leans towards you, while the car swerves sympathetically in the same direction. “This place? This is Crabtree Hill.”

“Oh, thanks!”

The name is strange to you, but your thoughts linger behind for some time after the car has swept on. For the moment your lifelong conviction that it would be utterly impossible to live in the suburbs has suddenly weakened. Those trees and gardens were rather jolly, weren't they? And the way that the people all seemed to know each other. . . . Of course it might be a bit different in wet weather. Perhaps, also, the people wouldn't seem quite so pleasant if you weren't passing them at forty miles an hour. And yet. . . . Oh, well, it's too late now to think of digging yourself up by the roots. Once a Londoner, always a Londoner. Your eyes and thoughts return to the speedometer needle. The car has discovered another main road and is roaring away towards the sunset. The whole vision fades swiftly from your mind.

So you go on. But we can no longer accompany you. For Crabtree Hill is the scene of a story, and that story it is now our plain duty to relate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Percy Williams and Stanley Johnson were young men when they first came to Crabtree Hill, and though they had seen the place expand from mere meadowland to its present highly-developed condition, though they could easily remember the days before the golf course was laid out, and the halt was turned into a station, and the cinema de luxe was erected in Haig Avenue, no one could dream of calling them anything but young men now. In actual years neither of them could reasonably hope to see forty again, but what is forty when you are healthy, unmarried, and have a comfortable and assured income? Why, nothing!

Mr. Williams was an estate agent, and Mr. Johnson was an insurance agent, and as such they had each taken a prominent part in the growth of this residential suburb. While Percy had sold building plots and run up houses "to suit the occupants' requirements," Stanley had covered the occupants against all possible and impossible risks. In the intricate financial arrangements which must always attend the rapid expansion of bricks and mortar they had shown themselves to be broad-minded, far-seeing, and courageous. They had no secrets from each other, but many secrets from their clients and their rivals, and the result was that, as Crabtree Hill thrived and prospered, so did these two old friends

add yearly to their balances in the local branch of the Metropolitan Bank—that branch which had opened in a small, galvanized-iron shanty, but now occupied the whole of a stone-fronted building in Fairbanks Crescent.

Nor, by any means, was this all.

"The great attraction of Crabtree Hill," Messrs. Williams and Johnson would declare to every new arrival who sought their assistance, "lies in its social advantages. In our little community we like to think of everybody as being on friendly terms with everyone else. Do not hesitate, therefore, to count on us to introduce you to as many of your neighbours as you like. It will be a pleasure for us to do so."

Fortunately, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it was also a pleasure for the new arrivals, and as combined masters of the Crabtree Hill ceremonies Messrs. Johnson and Williams worked like indefatigable slaves. But, it goes without saying, they were not treated as slaves. Rather were they respected as the uncrowned kings of the whole settlement which they had done so much to create. How they ever found time to continue dealing in real estate and insurance might well puzzle people unacquainted with their talent for organisation—or with their respective head clerks. For Mr. Williams was honorary secretary of the Crabtree Hill Automobile Club, of the Crabtree Hill Radio Society, and of the Crabtree Hill Mah-Jongg Circle; while Mr. Johnson performed the same offices for the croquet, dancing, and bridge clubs. They were joint secretaries of the Crabtree Hill Golf Club, of which they each held a large block of founders' shares, and when the lawn tennis boom came along, up they had bobbed again as joint secretaries of the Crabtree Hill Tennis Club.

There, every summer during the three days' tournament, you would find them in their glory, the one perched on the top of a green step-ladder, pronouncing judgments which no competitor or spectator would ever dare to question; the other lurking majestically in a small marquee labelled "Committee." And in the spacious tea-room of the tennis pavilion you might see, in a glass-fronted case, still further evidence of their generous interest in this popular sport—the Johnson Challenge Bowl (for ladies) and the Williams Challenge Cup (for gentlemen). Anybody who won one of these trophies for three years in succession would be presented by the same

public-spirited donors with a small plated replica which he or she might actually take home with them. No wonder that rivalry ran high on the two hard and the four grass courts whenever this annual festival came round. No wonder that you saw all those youths and maidens hurrying along with tennis rackets. The game was taken seriously at Crabtree Hill, and one year—yes, one year a local champion had even been egged on to enter his name for Wimbledon.

What excitement there was when the entry was accepted! What disappointment when he was knocked out (6—2, 6—1, 6—0) in the first round of the draw! What a wonderful dinner, though, was given for him in the aforesaid spacious tea-room on his return to Crabtree Hill!

On this occasion (as on most others) both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Williams delivered long and patriotic speeches. They said—rightly, we think—that sport was not a question of winning or losing; it was a matter of playing the game. If there were one thing, they added, which all who belonged to the Crabtree Hill Tennis Club had learnt on its wonderful courts, it was to—er—to play the game. (Loud cheers.) Despite his apparent non-success at the All-England meeting, they looked forward to the day when Mr. Herbert Cox (the vanquished champion) should win the Williams Challenge Cup for the third time in succession. It was not, of course, for them, etc., etc., but on the other hand—and so on and so forth.

Further cheering followed this well-expressed sentiment, and thereafter—as usual—the evening developed into an orgy of praise for the twin gods of Crabtree Hill. They were severally, unitedly, and musically declared to be jolly good fellows, and the company eventually separated with the general feeling that if Messrs. Williams and Johnson hadn't actually passed into the Men's Final at Wimbledon themselves, then it was only because they were so busy serving their fellow-members that they couldn't spare the time. As for Mr. Cox, he was pretty well forgotten, and whether because of this or because he realised the inevitable limitations of his game, he made no second assault on the Williams Challenge Cup. He gave up tennis altogether and took to playing golf. "After all," he said, "as long as one gets the exercise. . . ."

Hardly a sportsman, perhaps, in the best sense of the word. A likeable fellow,

though, when you got to know him, and doing quite well for himself (so it was said) in the City.

There is a prejudice at some of the more swagger tennis clubs against members of the committee taking an active part in the arena at the tournament meetings. It is held, we understand, that their position places them *hors concours*, and they have to do the best they can by wearing rosettes, or acting as linesmen, or interrupting matches to examine the height of the net.

But with two such popular figures as Mr. Johnson and Mr. Williams, this arrangement would scarcely have satisfied the spectators, and every year, accordingly, their names were found in opposite halves of the draw; from which they generally disappeared early on the second day of the meeting. For it was part of their charm that they played no game with such superlative skill as ever to come into collision with the really keen executants. They came along to give the necessary "go" to the opening stages of the contest, but having achieved this—and no defeated players were ever more heartily applauded—they slipped gracefully over into the social side of the affair.

On the third and last day they were committee men and nothing else—untiring in their work on the green step-ladders, at bullying the ball-boys, at entering the results on the score-sheet; still more untiring at flitting from group to group in the stands, at complimenting mothers on their daughters' successes, at saying "Hard luck, old chap!" to the less fortunate competitors; above all, at introducing everybody to everybody else.

Then there was the prize-giving, with speeches and votes of thanks and counter-speeches, and the tennis dance later in the evening, with more speeches and more votes of thanks and more harmonious asseverations that the twin gods were jolly good fellows. Lastly the fireworks, with Messrs. Johnson and Williams dashing heroically about with lighted tapers and being besought, with shrill screams, by the female merrymakers to take more care of their precious lives. Then the whole thing was over. Another summer season at Crabtree Hill had been brought to its triumphant conclusion; the presiding deities were enthroned more securely than ever in their shrines, and there was nothing left but for the settlement to break up for its yearly holiday by the sea, and from



there, we need hardly add, to send innumerable picture postcards to Mr. Percy Williams and Mr. Stanley Johnson.

It goes without saying—but we shall say it, all the same—that in a land where there

the younger generation the credit for the fact that the majority of these attempts were made on their behalf by their mammas, but this doesn't, of course, imply that they were any easier to resist. Nevertheless, as



"Untiring at introducing everybody to everybody else."

are ten women for every nine men, and in a suburb where two such eligible bachelors were so perpetually in evidence, many attempts were made to ensnare them into the toils of holy matrimony. We will give

the years passed by, parent after parent found herself compelled to give up the chase. The dreams that her Doris or her Ivy or her Gladys might reign as Queen of Crabtree Hill—for it was always assumed that the

first act of the new bride would be to put the rival king out of the way—remained dreams and nothing else. It was amazing with what skill and certainty Messrs. Johnson and Williams contrived to turn aside all the shafts which were directed at their hearts; and though it might partly be explained by the practice of most mothers to pursue both gentlemen at once (so as to be on the safe side), it was clear that their freedom must ultimately be more than a matter of luck.

And so, undoubtedly, it was. They knew well enough what the effect of marriage must be—the definite end which it must put to their universal intimacy with everybody in Crabtree Hill; the jealousies which must follow; the entanglements with women's cliques; the broadcasting of their secrets; the irksome necessity of ceasing to be all things to all men. They weren't going to give up their leadership, the worship of all and sundry, simply for the sake of what is so erroneously called a home. No, thank you. They had their homes, comfortable, well-kept, and convenient; and if ever they got tired of them, there wasn't a house in the district which they couldn't immediately enter with the certain assurance that they would be pressed to stay for the next meal.

No weaker moments troubled them, when they pined for companionship or children. They had not won their position as public characters without a struggle at the beginning, but now that they had done so, they knew a great deal better than to give it up. They knew, or believed they knew, that Crabtree Hill would be lost without them, and to continue their enjoyable tyranny over it was, once again, their notion of playing the game.

So, one after one, Doris and Ivy and Gladys were withdrawn from the lists, and in due course they overcame the handicap of their numerical superiority elsewhere. They were happy, even if their mothers were not. And at each wedding one of the joint rulers was best man, while the other was held in reserve as prospective godfather.

"Come here, Percy darling," you would hear the young mothers calling to their offspring. Or "Stop it, Stanley!"

At that time the air of Crabtree Hill was full of cries like these.

Late one afternoon, at the beginning of the lawn tennis season, the two secretaries were sitting in their private room in the pavilion—labouring, as ever, in the sub-

scribers' interests—when their attention was attracted by a firm knock on the door.

"Hullo!" said Mr. Johnson. "Was that a knock?"

"It sounded," said Mr. Williams, "like someone knocking."

And then, as they both drew breath to shout "Come in!" the door opened and a young woman appeared on the threshold.

"I say," she remarked, "which of you is the secretary?"

Neither Mr. Williams nor Mr. Johnson had intended to rise to his feet, for, although by no means lacking in courtesy, they held pretty strong views about the sanctity of their official lair. But the young woman was both personable and comely, and the result was that somehow or other they did rise to their feet.

"We are," they replied, speaking simultaneously. "And what can we do for you?"

"I want to join your tennis club," said the young woman. "That is, if you can really recommend it."

One can imagine the frigid dignity with which, in ordinary circumstances, the secretaries would have treated this last observation. But the young woman was both good-looking and attractive, and the actual answer which she received contained no hint of rebuke.

"Certainly," said Mr. Johnson, nipping in first. "If you will kindly give me your name and address, I will let you have a proposal form."

It was Mr. Williams, though, who had already found the proposal form and was holding it out.

"Thanks," said the young woman. "My name is Skinner—Miss Poppy Skinner. I'm living with my aunt, Miss Potts. I expect you know her."

For a moment the two secretaries seemed somewhat taken aback. The only Miss Potts whom they knew kept the Crabtree Hill Post Office, and for such experts on social matters this made her niece's candidature a little awkward. Miss Skinner, seeing them hesitate, did her best to put them at their ease.

"I'm afraid I'm not much of a player," she ran on. "You see, I'm working in a shop in London now, and it doesn't give one much time for practice, does it?"

This was worse and worse. And yet, as we believe we have mentioned, Miss Skinner was both beautiful and charming. At the same instant the same decision entered the secretaries' heads. If anyone in Crabtree

Hill had the power to overcome these disadvantages, to issue a patent of nobility to so deserving but unfortunately placed a young woman, was it not themselves? Their eyes met. Understanding and hostility were in that glance; and then:

"Well, well," said Mr. Williams breezily, "you'll get plenty of practice, I hope, with us."

"We're always pleased," added Mr. Johnson, "to help beginners."

"Oo," said Miss Skinner gratefully, "that's awfully good of you."

"Not at all," replied the two secretaries, bowing politely.

They said nothing about the usual formality of finding a proposer and seconder for the new candidate, for they had determined to propose and second her themselves. They did so, moreover, and with such backing there can be no surprise that Miss Skinner was elected at the very next meeting of the committee.

"In these days," said Mr. Johnson, "no one can blame a girl who works for her own living."

"It is the age of democracy," added Mr. Williams. "Socially speaking, I think you will find Miss Skinner a real acquisition to the Club."

The voting in her favour was unanimous.

Nevertheless, it wasn't very long before people—and especially the mothers of Crabtree Hill—began to talk.

"Of course," they said, "that Miss Skinner is a nice little thing, and it's very good of her to work so hard all the week, but she's more what I'd call a *man's* girl—if you see what I mean."

Everybody saw what they meant.

"I sincerely hope," they were saying a little later, "that neither Mr. Johnson nor Mr. Williams will allow that little Miss Skinner to make a fool of him. But there's something—well, rather *odd* about it all, if you see what I mean."

As before, their meaning was as clear as crystal. Yet there were others—men mostly—who declined to see anything odd in the matter. Why shouldn't the secretaries help to coach a new member, if they wanted to? And if she were so particularly unpromising a pupil, why shouldn't they take a little longer than usual?

"Ah," replied the prophets, "that's just the point!"

There was no arguing with persons like these. The men laughed and forgot about

the whole thing. When they met Miss Skinner they smiled at her, and her answering smile was always friendliness itself—friendliness and nothing more.

Almost every evening, though, the most extraordinary triangular matches were taking place on the fourth grass court—matches in which two of the players became remarkably hot, and the third remained as remarkably cool.

"You want to keep your eye more on the ball, Miss Skinner," Mr. Williams would say, "and follow through, like this." Whoosh! went his racket, and then: "Oh, well, that wasn't quite the idea, but you see what I'm driving at, don't you?"

"Keep 'em low, Miss Skinner," the other secretary would join in. "Keep 'em low and hit 'em hard, like this." Plunk! went the ball into the net. "Oh, well, that wasn't quite it, but you get the notion, don't you?"

"I'm sure I shall never be as good as you and Mr. Williams," Miss Skinner would reply. "I'm sometimes afraid you're wasting your time over me, you know."

"Pooh! Nonsense!" said the secretaries. "You're getting on splendidly."

They wouldn't hear of her cutting short her hours of practice, and as she found it all a little exhausting, she became very ingenious at inducing them to play with each other.

"I learn much more by watching you," she said; "and, besides, a single is such a much better game."

Then she would withdraw gracefully to the edge of the court—there to hold another court of her own—while the two secretaries plunged and galloped and panted to and fro, each with one eye on the ball and the other fixed firmly on Miss Poppy Skinner.

"Fault!" "Double!" "Outside!" they would shout. Or, "Sorry, old man; I wasn't quite ready." They got abominably hot and felt abominably stiff when it was all over. Miss Skinner, however, never failed to congratulate them on their prowess.

"I'm learning more every day," she said. "I shall be thrilled when I see you both playing in the tournament."

The same dogged look came into both the secretaries' faces. This thoughtless statement had given them a great idea.

It has been observed before, and will most certainly be observed again, that of all the foolish creatures who encumber this earth, none can compare with the confirmed bachelor who has just ceased to be confirmed. Why Messrs. Johnson and Williams should



separately suppose that Miss Skinner was waiting to fall into the arms of the winner of the latter's Challenge Cup, it is a little hard to see. She had given no kind of hint that this was her intention. All she had done was to discover (so she believed) a means of ridding herself of their somewhat embarrassing attentions. For so long as they played with each other it was obvious that they couldn't try to sport with her. They were nice old things, Miss Skinner told herself—and how they would have gnashed their diminishing teeth if they had known it!—but it would be a thousand pities if they were encouraged to become soppy.

And so she continued to watch their activities from a safe distance, and to see, so far as she could, that they were kept busily employed. The only soppieness permitted to them was such as could easily be treated in the cold shower-baths attached to the pavilion.

But, for all her care, the situation was not one which could, in the nature of things,

remain stationary. A wedge had at last been driven in between the two rulers of Crabtree Hill. The frank confidence which they had shared with each other for so long was being strained to pretty near the breaking-point. Where it would all end, no one could tell. But there was an ominous tension as the summer weeks slipped by, hardly eased by the semi-public bickerings which were marring the committee meetings of the golf and tennis clubs. The stage seemed set for some cataclysmic development in the history of this modern Arcadia

About ten days before the opening of the annual tournament both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Williams suddenly disappeared from the scene. Each of them had succeeded in taking Miss Skinner aside, and each of them had made practically the same mysterious announcement.

"I know how keen you are," they had said, "on my winning the Challenge Cup. But I am afraid that after all this practice I may be getting a little stale. I am going away for a short holiday, therefore, but when I come back, and if I do win the Cup, then may I hope . . ."

And here each of them had seized her hand, wrung it feverishly, and bolted madly from her presence. Miss Skinner had been distinctly puzzled, but for their temporary departure she was as distinctly relieved. She was, if the truth must be told, finding her evenings at the tennis club a little monotonous, and though she would always have preferred talking to playing, she decided that during the secretaries' absence she would sample a change of atmosphere at the Golf Club. For one thing, there wouldn't be quite so many women there.

As for the secretaries themselves, without confiding in a soul—and still less in each other—they had both made arrangements with separate professional instructors to take a short and intensive course of coaching in the art of lawn tennis. Yes, to this dishonourable depth had the blind god driven those two former authorities on playing the game. For the whole of those ten days they leapt and slashed with their rackets at the bidding of sunburnt men who didn't even trouble to remove their sweaters, and when it was all over—it is strange how their lives continued to run on parallel lines—they each received (in exchange for a handsome cheque) the same modified tribute to their progress.

"Well," said the instructors, "there's not much wrong with your service now. But as for what happens if anyone takes it, that's still a bit hard to say. Where you've made the mistake, sir, if you don't mind my saying so, is in not starting these lessons about fifteen years ago."

"Yes, yes," said the secretaries, controlling themselves with an effort. "Quite."

But in their respective trains, on the way back to Crabtree Hill, hope persisted in surging upward. The second part of the instructors' remarks faded into insignificance. The first inspired them with more confidence every moment.

They arrived home in plenty of time to perform the operation known as "seeding the draw," and were careful, as ever, to place themselves at different ends of the list. Each was convinced that, with his newly-acquired skill, he would forge his way through to the final round, but nothing would have surprised either of them more than to meet his former colleague and present rival on that slender eminence.

And yet—for we have already hinted that, despite the glory of its clothes and accoutrements, Crabtree Hill was no great shakes at the actual game—this was precisely what happened. Those two irresistible services went smashing through round after round. Player after player metaphorically bit the symbolical dust, and on the big score-sheet in the little marquee the names of Williams (P.) and Johnson (S.) drew nearer and nearer together. As the sun sank to rest on the evening of the second day, the names met at last behind a single bracket. Not only had the two secretaries demolished every opponent save each other, but they had done so with such record speed that they had the whole of the remaining day in which to fight for the Cup.

They left the courts by separate routes that night, and returned in the same manner on the following afternoon. But it was a Saturday, and there was Miss Skinner, back again from the Golf Club and surrounded with a selection of both kinds of members, ready to smile on the victor and—yes, to reward him.

Each of the finalists greeted her as he made his way into the arena.

"If I win——" said Mr. Johnson, gazing deeply into her eyes. And then, with a gallant bow, he trotted nimbly down on to the centre court.

"If the Cup goes to me——" said Mr. Williams, squeezing her forcibly by the hand. And then, with a last backward glance, he tripped after his rival.

The umpire climbed the steps of his green ladder, descended again to order a dog to be removed from the front row of spectators, ascended once more, tilted his straw hat well over his eyes, crossed his legs, and—in dead silence—the game began.

It was noticeable, as it was also understandable, that at the opening of this supreme test neither player was quite up to his recent form. Mr. Williams's service, though extremely violent, was a little wide of the mark, and after a ding-dong struggle

(in the course of which his ball twice struck the umpire on his fancy waistcoat) the set went to his opponent at 6—4. After this, though, it was Mr. Johnson's turn to disappoint his backers, and Mr. Williams captured the second set at 7—5. For the third set there was an all-round recovery of form, and many bursts of applause from the closely-packed stands, before Mr. Johnson suddenly ran out at 8—6. Mr. Williams, however, succeeded in equalising in the fourth chukker (one begins to realise how it is that sporting journalists develop their vocabularies), and the sets stood at two all.

For the decisive innings both competitors prepared themselves with a draught of water from the shelf under the umpire's seat, and then—frowning slightly as they once more recalled their instructors' suggestions—to it they went again. They were past their early uncertainty now, and it may be said without hesitation that so far as their services went—and neither professor had committed himself beyond this point—they were doing those gentlemen the very utmost credit.

"Fifteen-love. Thirty-love. Forty-love. Game to Johnson," chanted the umpire. And then, as the service passed to the other player: "Fifteen-love. Thirty-love. Forty-love. Game to Williams." For the first time in its history lawn tennis was being played with a mathematical precision which, as the spectators were beginning to see, was leading to most unusual results. For as neither antagonist could ever succeed in returning the other's professionally-trained service, it followed—much as the night the day—that neither of them could ever win two games in succession.

At tea-time—when the score was twenty-five games all—the umpire took it on himself to suggest an interval, hoping to discover some technical rule which might bring the deadlock to a conclusion. But the two secretaries wouldn't hear of it. Dripping with moisture and casting agonised glances in the direction where Miss Skinner was enjoying her fourth strawberry ice, they announced their settled determination to fight things out to a finish. The umpire climbed back to his perch, and on they both went.

At six o'clock the score was 58—57 in Mr. Williams's favour.

At seven o'clock it was 81 all.

At eight o'clock Mr. Johnson led, 113—112.

At half-past eight, when the score was 129 all, the steward came out from the pavilion and whispered to the umpire that the soup for the Tournament Dinner was hopelessly burnt; and whether because of this, or because they had really had enough of it, the spectators were beginning to lose patience. One hesitates to use such a word as "barracking" in connection with so refined a suburb as Crabtree Hill, but the fact remains that by a quarter to nine (135—134, Williams leading) the game was proceeding to an accompaniment of both mockery and derision.

In vain the exhausted umpire scowled over alternate shoulders. "Call 'em off!" shouted the mutinous onlookers. "Tell 'em to stop!" "We want our dinner!"

The sheer exaggeration of the finalists' sportsmanship had turned their former admirers against them as one man. The fickle crowd, which had never thought to see a record broken on the Crabtree Hill courts, was already murmuring—nay, cat-calling—because of the unexampled thoroughness with which it had been done at last. And that sound, though the frenzied players might not recognise it, marked the close of their long, their once triumphant reign.

Eye-witnesses differ as to how the end actually came. Some say that the mob rushed the court before the two champions fainted. Others affirm that it was Mr. Johnson's collapse (or possibly that of Mr. Williams) which brought the spectators rushing down on them. It is certain in any case that the match stands in the Club archives as a draw, and that the Club minutes, in reporting the annual dinner, make no reference to speeches from either of the honorary secretaries.

They were lying in bed at their respective homes, their medical officers in resentful attendance (for were they not missing the fireworks?), and their resignation from public life awaiting merely the strength to lift their fountain pens. And in a dark corner of the tennis ground Miss Poppy Skinner was sharing an inadequate seat with Mr. Herbert Cox.

"Of course, darling," she had just said, "I'm awfully *sorry* for the poor old things, but, after all, you know, it *was* only a game."

# THE ROSE-COVERED HOUSE

By MARGARET WYMER

ILLUSTRATED BY C. FLEMING WILLIAMS

IT was her first evening at the hotel. She glanced round the lounge to see if anyone looked interesting, and came to the conclusion that one person did, and that all the rest most decidedly did not. The one who did was a man who appeared to be about thirty-five years old. He was sitting in the corner of a low sofa, with a cigarette in his mouth, one hand in his pocket, and it was obvious from his expression that his thoughts were not occupied with anything in his immediate vicinity. He had a straight nose, rather an ugly mouth, black hair neatly parted, and very attractive eyes.

There were many people in the lounge, but no one spoke to him, and he spoke to no one. She stole several glances at him after she had first noticed him, and the last time their eyes met for a moment. It was the last time, because when it happened he got up and left the room in so pointed a way, it seemed to her, that she found herself thinking, with a shade of annoyance, of the old saying, "A cat may look at a king."

The next morning, as she sat at breakfast, when he passed her table on the way to his own he created exactly the same impression of himself in her mind as he had on the previous evening, except that he now looked bored instead of pensive.

Day after day went by, and she never saw him speak to anyone. Once she met him on the stairs, and he took his hat off and the cigarette out of his mouth until she had passed. She felt herself blushing foolishly, for their eyes had met again for a second during the process. She heard him bounding up two steps at a time after that.

"I seem to have the effect of making him run like a hare when I look at him," she thought.

Every day she saw him start off for a long walk or driving his little two-seater car,

and every evening after dinner he took the corner seat on the low sofa, when it was not occupied, and lit one cigarette after another—he never seemed to stop smoking except at meals.

"I wonder if he has had some trouble, or if he is shy, or *what* is the matter with him?" she thought to herself, as she knitted and watched him furtively from time to time, and suddenly, as she wondered, he surprised her with a smile.

A few days later something happened which literally squeezed a remark out of him. She was walking down the drive, when he turned his car in suddenly and, coming sharply round the gateposts, did not notice her. He put the clutch out hard and the brake on, but it was too late, and the front wheel caught her foot.

"I am sorry," he said, jumping out over the side of the car. "Are you hurt?"

"No, I shall be all right in a minute. I'll just go in and sit down," she replied. And she turned and limped towards the front door. He gave her his arm and helped her inside, and, after further apologies for his carelessness, went to put the car away.

When she did not appear at dinner that night, he was rather concerned, and the next morning he wrote a note and sent it to her room.

"I am afraid you were rather badly hurt," he wrote, "and as you ought not to walk for a bit, I wonder if you would let me make some amends for my carelessness by taking you for a drive in the car?"

She replied that she would be delighted. They drove in silence for the first mile or two, and then she said: "I feel so sorry for you."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you were forced to speak to

me by an accident, and I think you must have hated to do it."

He laughed and asked why she thought that.

"I have seen you daily for a fortnight now," she explained, "and the first time I had heard your voice was yesterday, when you ran into me with the car."

He smiled, but did not answer.

"I suppose I must not ask why you never speak?" she continued. "Do you feel as bored with life as you look?"

"Very nearly."

"Why? Is there a reason for it?"

His face darkened.

"Yes," he said, in a way that made her refrain from asking any more.

They drove on in silence for some time, and then he turned round and looked at her a little anxiously:

"Tired?" he asked gently.

"No, I am enjoying it."

That evening, when she came into the lounge after dinner, he was seated as usual on the low sofa with his cigarette and his day-dreams. Never once during two hours did he turn his head in her direction, or make the slightest sign of ever having seen her before.

"Rather rude," she reflected, and wondered if he regretted his hospitality, or intended to show her that their acquaintance ended with the drive. She made up her mind that if he asked her again she would refuse. If he could not acknowledge her in public, he should not speak to her in private either—she wanted no charity from him. She would rub her foot with embrocation, and show him that she could walk as well as anyone else, and was not dependent on him for the air and the sunshine.

She watched him covertly from eight till ten. For the first half-hour she put his ignoring of her presence down to shyness; at a quarter to nine she was beginning to think him a little rude; at a quarter past she decided that he had been flattered and spoilt by women; but when the clock struck ten, and she had just come to the conclusion that he was impossibly conceited, he sprang up on the last stroke, bestowed on her a sudden, tender smile, and made a rapid exit through the swing door of the lounge.

That smile upset all her calculations and made a re-analysis of his character necessary. He puzzled her enormously; it seemed so strange to play the part of an agreeable host to a woman in an atmosphere of

friendliness all the afternoon, and then behave in the evening as though you had never seen her. Well, it was no good puzzling out a riddle that only time could solve, and so she folded her knitting and went to bed. She just would not bother about him any more, and as she came to this decision it occurred to her for the first time how very much she had been bothering about him ever since the evening of her arrival. She could not get away from his eyes, and that night they haunted her in the darkness of her room, until she was obliged to light a candle to put them away from her vision.

The next morning after breakfast, when he was occupied with the newspaper, with nothing of him visible from where she sat, except the hands which held it wide open and his crossed legs, he laid it down on his knees with a sudden noisy rustle, and asked without the slightest warning: "Is your husband in the Service?"

And she had not even been aware that he knew she was married. She was so taken aback that, instead of answering his question, she fell to wondering how he knew, and whether to be glad or sorry. She looked down into her lap. It was so long since she had seen her husband that she had come almost to regard herself as a widow, and supposed that *everyone* else did so, too. She looked up again to find his dark eyes fixed intently on her face and filled with an expression of patient waiting.

"In the Service, yes," she said dully.

With a faint smile he raised the paper again in front of his face, and she realised that the conversation so abruptly opened was definitely closed. She came to a fresh conclusion that he was a little conceited, or, at least, that he intended that his companionship should not be had merely for the asking.

Three times that day she rubbed her foot with the embrocation, and the next morning she limped rather painfully down the drive when she knew that he was smoking a pipe in a window of the lounge, and would not be able to help seeing her pass. As she neared the gate she cast a side glance at the hotel, and found, to her dismay, that his figure had vanished from the window. A touch of disappointment coincided with a twinge of pain in her foot, and she was regretting the inconvenience to which she had put herself, when she heard his footstep on the gravel behind, and his voice saying:



"My carelessness has given me a good excuse for being of some use. I hope I may take you for another drive."

She did not decline as she had meant to, for he had been a very pleasant companion before, and the mystery in his past life, of

photograph it. It's just the sort of house I like, and if I ever did such a foolish thing as to get married, I should not hesitate to buy it."

She looked at him curiously; this was a new side to his character.



"'It's like fairy-land.'"

"Do you know they say that when people are as silent as you, it's a sure sign that they are in love?" she said.

"Do they?"

"How reserved he is!" she thought, but she persisted.

"I don't suppose you have ever done anything so worldly as that, have you?" she asked.

"As what?"

"Falling in love."

"I have once."

"And you did not marry her."

"I couldn't; she was married already."

"Poor boy!"

which he seemed so unwilling to speak, filled her with curiosity.

He asked her if she would mind driving to a certain place a few miles away.

"It's rather a bad road," he said, "but there's a little house for sale there that I have often thought of taking, and I want to

He relapsed into silence, and she wondered if he was annoyed, as he took it out of the car for several miles afterwards. She felt she had been on delicate ground, but she did so want to know more about him. He interested her, and all the other people in the hotel were so dull. In the midst of her

cogitations he pulled up with a jerk and said :

"This is the house."

"Oh, how charming!" she exclaimed in genuine admiration, for it was covered all over with roses: they were climbing round

"Do you know," she began, speaking very slowly, "I do not ask from idle curiosity, but I should be much interested to know what the woman is like whom you wanted to marry."

"Why?"



"'Will you stand in the porch?' he said. 'It will give a little life to the picture.'"

the windows, drooping over the front door, tumbling over the trellis work in the garden—red ramblers, yellow ramblers, roses of every kind and colour, and their scent was sweet and pungent in the air.

"It's like fairyland," she remarked, and added, quoting from a song, "'And I dream of the joys that will come with the roses in June.'"

He looked at her quickly, and, having climbed out of the car, focussed the house with his camera.

"Will you stand in the porch?" he said. "It will give a little life to the picture."

When he had finished they sat down for a few minutes on a seat in the garden and surveyed the summer scene in silence.

"I wonder if you *will* ever take it," she said.

"I'm afraid not," he replied rather sadly.

"It is such a sad little story."

"I will show you a photograph of her before I leave," he said.

She looked up quickly. "Are you leaving? When?" she asked.

"The day after to-morrow."

"Why are you going? Are you tired of the hotel?"

"No, it's not that. I am going because I want too much to stay."

"You speak in cryptograms," she said.

"One has to sometimes—don't you find that?"

She ignored the question—she was feeling rather depressed.

"Let us get into the car," she suggested.

She settled herself in, and he climbed over the side as he usually did. The little house

with the roses was soon left far behind, and they covered the fifteen miles back to the hotel without exchanging a word. As he helped her out at the end, he remarked :

"I am afraid to-morrow will be the last."

"Yes," she answered, and they looked straight at each other for a long minute. He did not run away now when their eyes met.

\* \* \* \* \*

She was sitting in the garden behind the hotel, when she saw him coming across the lawn in a blue suit, his hat in his hand and the inevitable cigarette between his lips.

"I have come to say good-bye."

She got up and came a step forward to meet him.

"Do you know you have forgotten a promise you made me to show me a certain photograph?"

He hesitated, then he said: "I did forget, and now it is packed."

"You mean you have repented of your promise?"

There was such a long pause that at last she said a little impatiently: "Have you?"

"I will send it," he replied, "and you can return it to me."

A moment later the black, glossy hair with the neat parting had been covered by a

grey hat, the tall figure in the blue suit had vanished, and she was reading in the garden alone.

The lounge seemed very dull that evening as she sat and knitted. She tried to take an interest in the people who were arguing over bridge, in the stout lady who, with her feet on the framework of a table, was staring at her rather rudely, she thought, or even in the old man, with the bald head, snoring loudly in the corner of the low sofa where her friend had sat every evening after she first came. What a different picture! How dared he take his place? She looked again, just once—that was all she could bear—then folded up her knitting and went to bed.

When she came down to breakfast next morning, there was a letter for her in the rack, in a man's handwriting. She opened it and drew out a piece of paper, from the folds of which something fluttered to the ground. On a plain sheet was written: "The photograph I promised you. Do not trouble to return it—I have others."

She stooped and picked up what had fallen, and, instead of the portrait of someone unknown to her, she found herself staring in amazement at a picture of herself standing in the porch of a house that was covered with roses.



## GREY DAYS, GOLDEN DAYS.

**A** GREY day on the moorland, and a grey day in the dale,  
The spirit of a stricken year in the moaning of a fall;  
A mist that makes the barnyard a grey wet world apart,  
And yet the day is golden in a grey old heart.

June sunlight in the barnyard, and a merry milking song,  
Diamonds on the duck-pool where the thirsty cattle throng,  
Young laughter down the white road that led me to the years,  
And yet the day is dimming in a mist of tears.

THOMAS MOULT.

# FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

IT was entirely typical of Jimmy Rigg that he missed the connection at Southling-by-the-Sea. It was, of course, the kind of thing that might happen to anyone, but it was also the kind of thing that could not help happening to Jimmy Rigg. He was that kind of man. ~~It~~ It is doubtful if a more accomplished train-misser ever cursed upon a platform.)

Jimmy Rigg was tall, lean, angular, and twenty-five. He owned an income of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and contrived another fifty by the perpetration of alleged light verse for the lesser comic papers. It was his ambition to write—and achieve celebrity from—genuine comic songs and snappy, mirth-compelling lyrics, an ambition which Destiny had so far not seen fit to gratify. True, the songs were undeniably written, but they were equally undeniably unsung; up to date there had been no pronounced rush of applicants for the privilege. One need say no more of Jimmy Rigg; a man who habitually misses trains and writes unsaleable comic songs must be left to explain himself.

Having elicited from an apparently exulting porter the information that he could not resume his broken journey to Marborough for at least two hours and a quarter, Jimmy swore whole-heartedly and wandered from the station with the three-fold object of buying tobacco, exploring Southling, and seeking some form of diversion. The first of these he found almost at once.

"The train service from here to Marborough," said Jimmy sourly to the tobacconist, "is just about everything a train service should not be."

The tobacconist glanced up with a gleam of interest in his eye.

"Marborough? Do you come from there, sir?"

"I do. I am now trying to get back."

"Have you seen Peter Patten?" asked the tobacconist unexpectedly. "He's at the Hippodrome there this week."

"I saw him last night," said Jimmy, in some surprise. "Jolly good."

"He's a Southling man, sir," said the tobacconist proudly. "Born here. His people live here yet. We're rare and proud of Peter, as you'll understand, though we've not seen him often since he made his name. We've been hoping he'd look us up while he's at Marborough." He continued to speak at some length of Peter Patten.

"I see," said Jimmy, as he finished. "Town's most eminent son, what?"

"That's about it, sir. That'll be two-and-eleven, sir, please."

Jimmy Rigg paid and wandered out again into the diminutive High Street, a prey to conflicting emotions. Mention of Peter Patten had served to remind him of the futility of his own hopes.

Peter Patten was one of the three most famous and beloved comedians upon the music-hall stage. He paid more in income-tax than any Cabinet Minister received in salary, and, in the opinion of many, was of far greater value to the country. His appearance, complete with the bushy red wig, beard and whiskers which he affected as a disguise, was the signal for the audience to rise as one man and vociferate its joy. His photograph adorned shop windows from Brighton to Buckie, N.B. Cigarettes, soap, and even a bowler hat had taken their name from his. No man can ask for greater recognition.

Jimmy Rigg's slightly morbid interest in Peter Patten arose from the acknowledged fact that a song once sung by the great man became at once a kind of young gold mine for its fortunate author. It was a dream of Jimmy's life to hear the voice of Peter

Patten give fame and immortality to one of his own compositions, but it was a dream which had small likelihood of ever coming true.

Engrossed in these and similar reflections, Jimmy ambled aimlessly along until, chancing to glance up, he discovered that in his absorption he had passed through the inconsiderable town and gained the open country beyond. At the same moment he observed the girl.

She was leaning upon a gate, her back towards him, and there was that in her attitude which caused Jimmy Rigg to halt and regard her curiously. He saw that her head was bowed and that her shoulders were shaking perceptibly; there came to his ears a distinct and unmistakable sob.

Jimmy looked about him. Save for himself and this patently distressed lady, there was no sign of life visible. For an instant he hesitated, and then cautiously approached her. Her face was hidden from him, but she seemed quite young and neatly, if shabbily, dressed; beneath a small hat was evident a quantity of red-gold hair.

A yard from her Jimmy hesitated again. He was not by nature a squire of dames, and was, indeed, prone to consider the female of the species as a mere unnecessary hindrance in times of stress and crisis; but some instinct notified him that he could not pass by and leave this girl weeping upon a gate. Mere decency ordered him at least to offer assistance. Red-gold hair, moreover, had always been comparatively popular with him. He drew a deep breath and coughed delicately.

"I beg your pardon," he remarked gently. "Is anything wrong?" A foolish question, but no better occurred to him at the moment.

The girl started and whirled to face him. He saw that she was of that extremely rare comeliness which is but enhanced by tears. In fact, he was not sure that he had ever seen a more attractive countenance.

"Oh!" she said confusedly. "I—I—no—"

"Can I do anything?" asked Jimmy. He was now absolutely certain that to pass on would be the act of a complete and utter bounder.

The girl made an effort to regain her composure; she achieved a gallant but pitiful smile.

"No, thanks. I'm—I'm just an idiot."

"So am I," returned Jimmy promptly,

"a perfect idiot. So I ought to help a fellow-idiot if I can. What's the trouble? Or is it private?"

The girl surveyed him gravely. The most kind-hearted of his friends could not have called Jimmy handsome—his mouth was too large, his visage too freckled, his ears too prominent for perfect beauty—but there was something about his face which invariably proved attractive to children and dogs, than whom there are no better judges of character. It seemed to attract the girl also, for she smiled again, a little less forcedly.

"It's only," she said, "that I've no money, and can't leave here till I get some."

"That's tough luck," said Jimmy; "but surely—"

"And I'm not the only one. There are four others. That's us."

She extended a finger, and Jimmy glanced in the direction indicated. A dozen yards away stood a large barn, upon whose wall were displayed two slightly weatherbeaten posters. The larger of these stated in immense black lettering that for One Week Only Peter Patten, the World-Famous Comedian, would appear at the Hippodrome, Marborough. The smaller poster gave to the universe the tidings that a certain lavishly belauded concert-party proposed to do their best to brighten Southling-by-the-Sea (also for one week only) at the Drill Hall nightly at eight.

Jimmy stared somewhat blankly at these announcements. Certainly they were not works of the highest art, but they did not strike him as sufficiently repulsive to move this girl to tears. Suddenly understanding dawned upon him.

"Oh, I see! You mean you're one of the concert party?"

She nodded unhappily.

"Show gone bust, I suppose?"

"Yes. It's a pretty rotten show, really, and we couldn't get a date at any of the big towns along the coast. We've been playing the little places, like this, for two months, and getting worse houses every time. This—this hole finished us. Yesterday the man who was running the show disappeared. So we're left with about nine shillings between the five of us. We've paid for the hall up to to-night, and we'll give one more show, but we'll get nothing out of it. Last night there were six people in the house."

Jimmy listened in silence to this history of disaster, his gaze fixed absently upon the

wall of the barn. He felt deeply moved. He was frequently hard up himself, but never so hard up as this. His opinion of the female sex was undergoing a rapid revision; he had never met a girl like this before, and it seemed to him that there must be something seriously wrong with a world that could permit one of her calibre to undergo such hardship. He brooded upon the problem.

"Can't borrow, I suppose?" he suggested.

"Who in this town is going to lend money to a broken-down concert-party?" returned the girl bitterly. "And none of us have any people who can send us any. I dare say we shall find some way out, but I don't see it yet. Anyway," she added suddenly, "it's a shame to plague you with all this. It's nothing to do with you. I must go back now. I only came out here to have one good weep. Thanks very much for trying to help. It's done me good to tell you." She began to move away.

"Wait!" said Jimmy sharply. For the past two minutes he had been staring at the posters on the wall with the fixed gaze of one whose mind is far away. An idea was slowly taking shape in his fertile brain—an insane, foolish, dangerous idea—an idea that could have come only to Jimmy Rigg, but an indubitable idea, none the less.

"I believe I *can* help," he said, and jerked a thumb at the poster of Mr. Patten. "That thing's given me a notion. Where's the rest of your party?"

"At the Drill Hall, I expect. But what—"

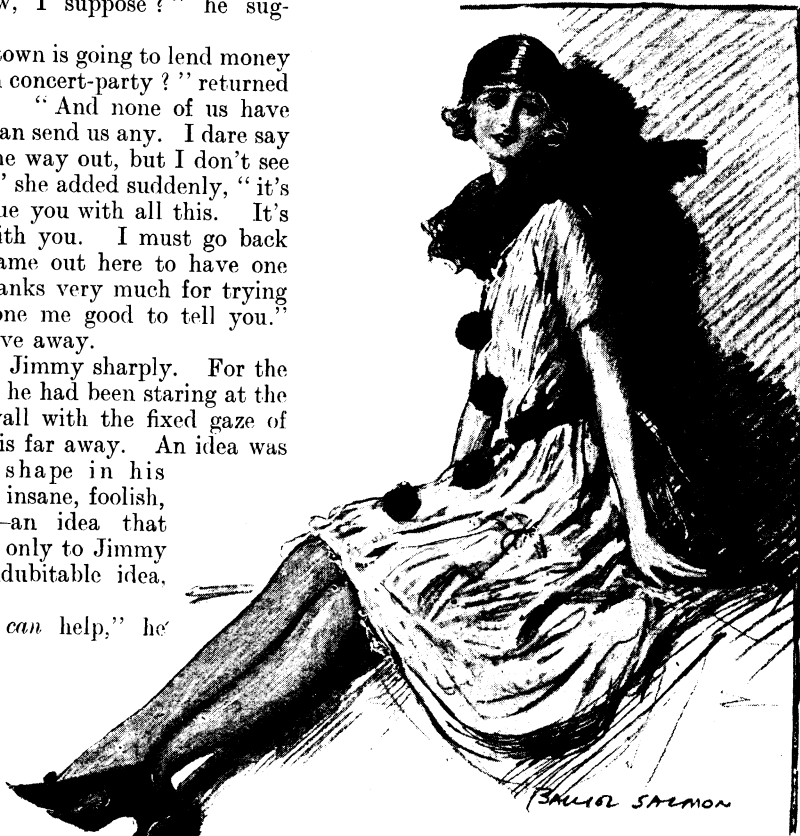
"Come along," said Jimmy briskly. "No time to waste. By the way, I ought to know your name, I think."

"Charity Clayton," answered the girl, smiling. "Sorry, but it is."

"Jolly good name, too. Mine's Rigg—Jimmy Rigg. Now come on. I'll explain when we see the others." He led the way at a rapid pace back towards the town.

At the Drill Hall, a red-brick erection of repellent architecture, the remaining members of the concert-party were discovered, engaged in brooding upon Fate.

Plainly despair had them firmly in its grip. They comprised two young men and two young women, the former lean, lank, and long-haired, the latter short, plump, and peroxidized. They were sitting about in dejected attitudes upon hampers, wearing expressions of the deepest melancholy. The entry of Charity and her escort did nothing to rouse them from their gloom.



"Miss Clayton, however, was wholly at her ease."

"Here they are," said Charity, whose normally sunny temperament seemed to be returning to power under the influence of renewed hope. "Reading from left to right: Miss Cynthia Warburton, Mr. Gerald Lees, Mr. Carleton Dunn, Miss Genista Chase. Wake up, you people! This is Mr. Rigg. He's going to get us out of this."

A gleam of interest appeared suddenly upon the faces of the company. Simultaneously they rose to their feet and came forward. Jimmy felt somewhat self-conscious as they gathered about him eagerly.

"How?" they demanded, as with one voice.

Jimmy drew back a step. He was unversed in the art of public oratory, but he nerved himself to the task.

"Well," he said slowly, "you can't get away from here without money, and you've no means of getting money except by giving a show. But the fatheads won't come to your show. That's right, isn't it?"

The company were understood to signify a moody assent.

"Then you must *make* them come. Now listen. You know Peter Patten?"

"Yes," chorused the company foggily.

"Well, Peter Patten was born in this one-eyed locality. He's the bright particular star of the town. He's the original little tin god of Southling-by-the-Sea. Babies are christened after him. He's the only thing the place is famous for. He's IT." Jimmy paused impressively. "If it got to be known around here that Peter Patten was taking part in your show to-night, by way of a joke and without warning, you'd make your fortunes."

There was a stunned silence. Jimmy proceeded:

"We can't get the real Patten, but we can provide a substitute. If you've got a red beard and wig in your outfit, the thing's easy. All we've got to do is to spread the word casually that Patten's going to do his song and dance as a member of your party to-night, just to surprise his home town. It's just the sort of thing he would do, by all accounts. They'll roll up in their hundreds."

There was another tense pause, broken at last by the voice of Mr. Carleton Dunn, who seemed a trifle brighter than his fellow-performers.

"You mean one of us is to pretend to be Patten?"

"That's the idea. It's quite safe. Very few of the folk here have ever had a chance to see him in his stage get-up, though they know what it is, of course. If they come here *expecting* to see him, they'll assume that the man they *do* see *is* he."

"But," objected Mr. Dunn, "we've been here a week now. They know us all by sight."

"Quite," said Jimmy. "Therefore *I* will give my celebrated impersonation of Peter Patten."

Charity gave a little astonished cry.

"You?"

"I. Obviously it can't be one of you,

and I've done enough of this sort of thing not to disgrace myself. I've seen Patten often enough, and"—he coughed modestly—"I know a couple of songs that Southling would love to hear."

At this point Mr. Gerald Lees emerged suddenly from a species of trance and gave tongue:

"Look here, I say, you know, we can't do this! We shall get run in, or something!"

"Why?" said Jimmy. "We're all right as long as we don't make any definite statement about Patten. We're only hinting that he *might* show up. I'll do all that—none of you need come into it at all. If they choose to mistake *me* for Patten, that's their affair. After all, it's only a superior form of leg-pull. And you owe this place something for not coming to your shows, and I owe it something because I missed a train here."

For a brief space no word was spoken. The members of the company regarded each other anxiously, as if debating the practicability of this peculiar scheme. Suddenly Charity smiled, walked over to a large hamper, lifted the lid, and delved vigorously in the depths; then she stood up, holding a vivid scarlet wig.

"Let's do it!" she said. "It's our only chance of raising enough cash to get us all back to Town, and I hate this beastly place, anyway!"

Mr. Carleton Dunn nodded agreement with this view.

"I'm with you," said he. The rest of the company appeared willing to follow his lead.

"Splendid!" said Jimmy. "Now I'll dash along and start the ball rolling. To-night you'll know what a full house looks like!"

In the street he paused for a moment and drew a deep breath. From his early youth he had always suffered from a craving for adventure in any form, and here was adventure ready to his hand. And more than that. It may as well be admitted here and now that Jimmy Rigg had not been entirely disinterested in his efforts to assist the concert-party. The welfare of that unhappy band had, of course, been prominent in his mind, but there had been also the knowledge that by assuming, for one night only, the *role* of Peter Patten he could at last contrive that the public should lend an ear to his songs. For as with the aspiring author who sees his first article in solid

type, so with the youthful composer who hears the first rendering of his melody: nothing else is of the least importance. Jimmy Rigg, determined that someone should listen to his achievements, felt that even Southling-by-the-Sea was better than nobody at all. He grinned happily as he bent his steps towards the tobacconist's shop where first he had heard mention of Peter Patten. He had completely forgotten that it had ever been his intention to catch a train to Marlborough.

\* \* \* \*

In Southling-by-the-Sea and the neighbouring villages the last performance of the concert-party is still spoken of with awe. It marked an epoch in the placid life of the district; it is the general opinion that nothing like it will be seen again. Jimmy Rigg had done his work discreetly and well. A few words to the garrulous tobacconist, a veiled hint to the postmistress, a casual remark to the landlord of "The Dog and Duck," and the thing was done. By mid-afternoon it was common knowledge that the great Peter Patten, the town's idol, had decided, in a fit of that freakish humour which had raised him to his present eminence, to make an unheralded appearance in the ranks of the hitherto despised concert-party, with whom, it was alleged, he was on the friendliest of terms. Southling-by-the-Sea, hastily assuming a clean collar, resolved that he should receive a fitting welcome.

Seven-thirty of the evening found Jimmy Rigg, his eye fixed to a hole in the curtain, watching Southling-by-the-Sea, having dug deep into its jeans for the benefit of Mr. Dunn at the box-office, filing, with much happy noise and badinage, into the hall. The spectacle caused him a momentary sensation of panic. For the first time he realised the enormity of his intended offence against these worthy burghers. In the first bright flush of his eagerness to assist the company in general and Charity Clayton in particular, the scheme had seemed tolerably sound; now, however, it appeared impracticable and dangerous in the extreme. If the imposture were by some mischance laid bare during the performance, his chance of escaping unscathed would be small indeed. For an instant he toyed with the idea of furtive flight, but the thought of Charity restrained him; he could not desert her now. . . . Fifteen minutes later, the ecstatic Mr. Dunn having torn himself from the blissful contemplation of more money

than he had ever seen in his life to announce that the hall could not hold another person, the dilapidated curtain wobbled up and the show began.

From the outset it met with a reception to which the company had long been strangers. The audience had come prepared to treat these mummers, if not with unbridled enthusiasm, at least with genial tolerance for the sake of Peter Patten. Mr. Gerald Lees, whose lot it was to open the revels with his masterly imitations of children, drawn corks, bees and handsaws, concluded his effort amid a sizeable volume of applause.

"Old man, it's a riot!" he exclaimed joyfully, if inaccurately, to Jimmy as he gained the wings.

"That's good," said Jimmy, and smiled encouragingly at Charity, who stood second on the bill. Miss Clayton, however, was wholly at her ease. Looking particularly charming in the pierrotic costume affected by the troupe, she achieved a distinct hit with her songs at the piano. Her exit was marked by what Mr. Lees again referred to as "a riot."

So far, so good. But as the evening wore along, the audience began to exhibit symptoms of restlessness. Southling had come to see Peter Patten, and Peter Patten had not yet appeared, nor was there any mention of him upon the programme. There became audible cries of "Peter!" and vague stampings of feet. When therefore, at the conclusion of Miss Warburton's little song and dance, Messrs. Dunn and Lees, with much comic business, displayed a large board inscribed "EXTRA TURN," the house rose and yelled its approval.

Jimmy, waiting in the wings, was aware of a singular weakness about his knees; his mouth felt very dry, and his wig and beard seemed anxious to stifle him. The voice of Charity served to stiffen his resolution.

"Good luck, Mr. Rigg," said she. "I know you'll be splendid!"

Jimmy smiled feebly, braced himself and wavered forth upon the little stage. Next moment he reeled back before the gale of noise that swept up at him.

Southling-by-the-Sea had no doubt that Peter Patten was the world's greatest man, and it grasped with both hands this opportunity of saying so. It stood up and yelled until its voice died from sheer exhaustion. Three-quarters of those present had never seen Peter in the flesh, but the flaming wig and beard had become a kind of household word.



"Peter!" they shouted. "Good old Peter! Watcher, Peter!"

For a moment Jimmy could only stand and gape. Very foolishly, he had not anticipated this welcome. His few previous appearances upon the boards had been upon strictly amateur occasions; never had he

enough song as comic songs go. Entitled humorously "Baby's Eyes," it began as a ballad, drifted into pure farce, and finished as a negro melody. Southling, who had never heard its like, listened as in a trance, and at its close burst into wild applause. Jimmy, now completely happy, glowed with pride.

His second composition went even better. This, a witty trifle dealing chiefly with income-tax, landladies, and kindred ills, involved the use of a member of the audience as a species of butt.

Running his eye along the front row, Jimmy selected a small, solemn-faced, middle-aged man in blue serge as being the most innocuous,



"'Good evening,' he said pleasantly. 'Are you Mr. Patten?'"

had to face anything like this. Again he contemplated ignominious flight; then, as Charity at the piano broke into the first of his songs, he became suddenly calm and at his ease. He forgot Peter Patten; forgot his hideous scarlet hair; forgot everything but that here was his chance to give his song—his own song—to at least a portion of the public. He cleared his throat, stepped forward, and gave tongue.

It was, as a matter of fact, a good

and proceeded to sing at him with immense gusto. Southling-by-the-Sea rocked in its seat with happy mirth. This was their own Peter.

Ten minutes later Jimmy, flushed with triumph and exertion, stood once again in the wings, while from beyond the curtain came the rapturous calls of the delighted house. He had no intention of appearing before them again, for even in his exaltation he perceived the danger of carrying

things too far ; but he found this appreciation very pleasant, even though he knew it to be aroused not so much by his songs as by his supposed personality. He beckoned to him Mr. Dunn.

"Better get on and tell 'em the extra turn's left the place," he said. "Don't mention any name. They'll stop all night if we don't shift 'em."

Mr. Dunn nodded and turned away. As he vanished round the curtain, Jimmy felt a touch

Jimmy started convulsively. At first the true import of this information did not reveal itself, but as its meaning grew clear, he turned pale behind his vivid whiskers and stared affrightedly at Charity. With a sickening sense of his own folly, he recalled the words of the tobacconist : "His people live here yet." Obviously Mr. and

Mrs. Patten had called for their celebrated son. He groaned aloud.

"The best thing to do," suggested Charity, "would be to take off that face-furniture



"'N-no,' stammered Jimmy helplessly."

on his arm. and turned to perceive Charity. He observed to his surprise that she wore an expression almost of panic.

"Oh, Mr. Rigg," she said quickly, "what do you think has happened ? Two dear old people have turned up, asking for you. They say their name is Patten !"

and slip out quickly. They won't recognise you without it. Then I'll tell them he's not here, as if I'd never heard of him."

Hurried reflection showed Jimmy no alternative. He nodded dumbly, tore off his wig and beard, and crept towards the stage-

door. But as he came within sight of it he saw that he was too late. Within the doorway, effectually prohibiting all passage, stood an aged couple, in deep converse with a small, solemn-faced, middle-aged man—none other, in fact, than Jimmy's carefully-chosen assistant for his second song. As Jimmy, sick at heart, turned to crawl away again, the voice of the old lady came to his ear :

"But, Peter dear, why didn't you tell us you were going to sing?"

Jimmy started again and turned miserably, to find, to his utter bewilderment, that the old lady had not been addressing him. At the same moment he encountered the eye of the solemn-faced man. The latter spoke briefly to the old couple, turned, and came towards the shrinking Jimmy.

"Good evening," he said pleasantly.

"Are you Mr. Patten?"

"N-no," stammered Jimmy helplessly.

The other raised a pair of extremely flexible eyebrows.

"No? But surely everybody here thinks so?"

It was at this point that the truth broke in upon Jimmy's comprehension with the abruptness of a lightning flash. He gasped.

"Great Scot! Are—are *you* Peter Patten?"

The solemn man regarded him gravely.

"Until this evening I had always thought so," he answered, "but now——"

He was interrupted by a new voice—the voice of Charity Clayton.

"I was afraid so, Mr. Rigg," she said.

"Mr. Patten, may I explain?"

Peter Patten bowed politely.

"I should certainly be interested," he observed. "I came here, after my show at Marlborough this evening, for the week-end, and found nobody at home. So I came here, and was told that I was about to perform. So I came in and saw myself perform. It was most interesting."

"Well, you see," said Charity, "it was like this." And she plunged into a recital

of the misfortunes that had led up to the impersonation. Peter Patten listened with an expressionless countenance.

"You see, we were desperate," finished Charity, "and what else could we do? And Mr. Rigg was awfully careful not to copy you exactly. It was the only way to get the people in."

For what seemed like a year at least the comedian said nothing. Suddenly he looked up at Jimmy.

"Those songs of yours—who wrote them?"

"I did," said Jimmy dazedly.

"Are they published? Have they been sung in public before?"

"No."

"Well, I like them. Would you care to let me have them? I'll see you don't lose by it."

Jimmy uttered a strangled gasp and fell back against the wall, entirely incapable of speech. Again it was Charity who answered for him.

"Oh, Mr. Patten, how splendid of you! Do you mean you're not going to——"

For the first time Peter Patten smiled.

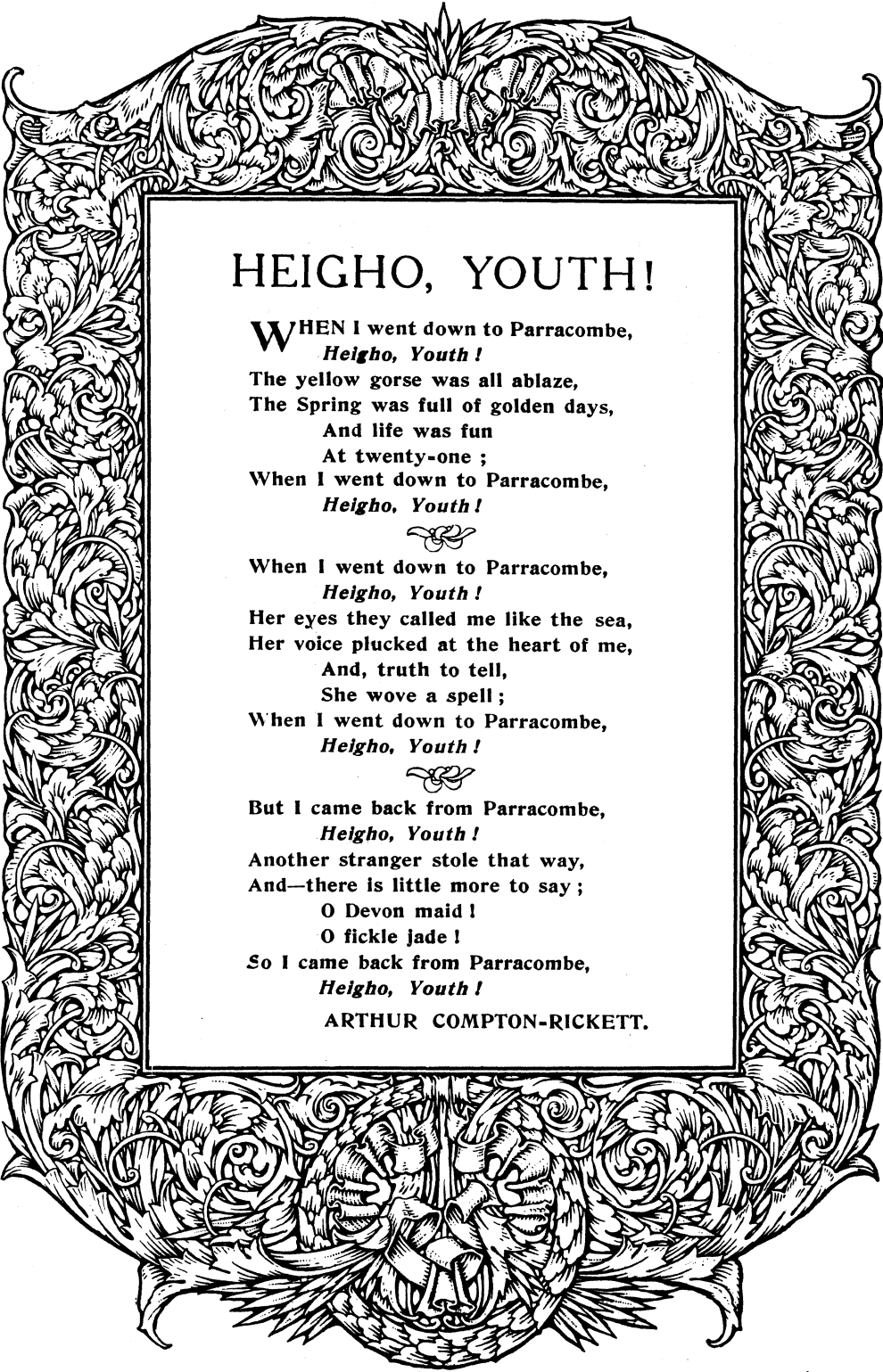
"If Mr.—Rigg, is it?—was able to make Southling believe he was me, it seems a pity to spoil it by undeceiving them, doesn't it? I don't suffer personally, as far as I can see."

\* \* \* \* \*

Peter Patten, now beyond all question Britain's greatest comedian, goes from strength to strength. His popularity—and therefore his salary—has immensely increased since it became known that, in order to assist a struggling concert-party, he appeared at a small seaside town and sang without fee or reward.

Whenever the great man makes a London appearance, there may invariably be observed, seated in the centre of the second row of the stalls and applauding with an almost fapatical frenzy, Mr. James Rigg, the talented and successful writer of songs, and Charity, his wife.





## HEIGHO, YOUTH!

WHEN I went down to Parracombe,  
*Heigho, Youth!*

The yellow gorse was all ablaze,  
The Spring was full of golden days,  
And life was fun  
At twenty-one;

When I went down to Parracombe,  
*Heigho, Youth!*



When I went down to Parracombe,  
*Heigho, Youth!*

Her eyes they called me like the sea,  
Her voice plucked at the heart of me,  
And, truth to tell,  
She wove a spell;

When I went down to Parracombe,  
*Heigho, Youth!*



But I came back from Parracombe,  
*Heigho, Youth!*

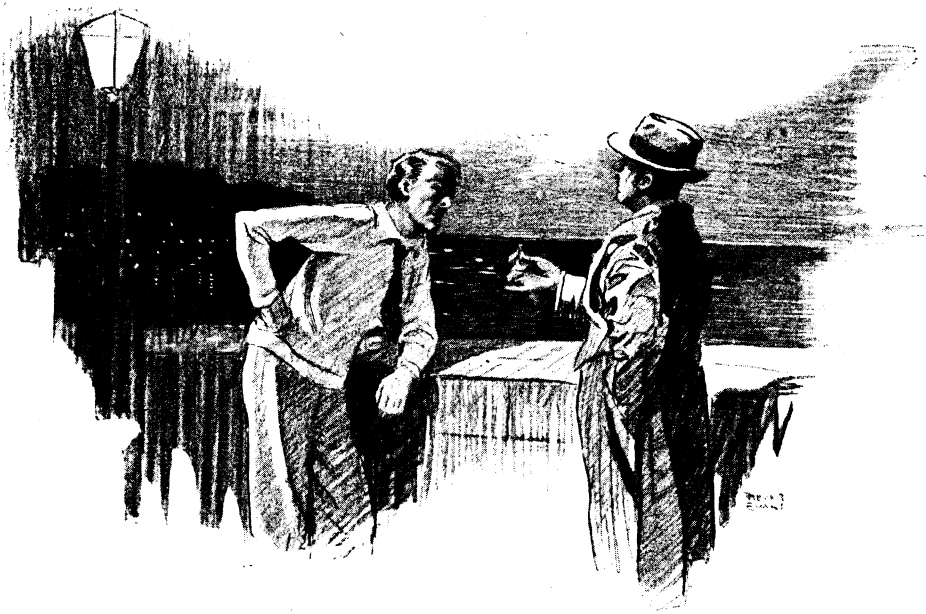
Another stranger stole that way,  
And—there is little more to say;

O Devon maid!

O fickle jade!

So I came back from Parracombe,  
*Heigho, Youth!*

ARTHUR COMPTON-RICKETT.



"How do our people strike you, anyhow?" . . . Thomas laughed again. "Really," he said, "I haven't had much opportunity as yet of studying them."

# FINESSE

By PHILIP BURTON

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

"YOU like the place?" Rendle Thomas looked up from the sea that lapped the rocks below in the moonlight and glanced at the man who had spoken to him. He took the cigar from his mouth. His first impulse—to snub the stranger who had spoken to him without provocation—he checked. After all, he reflected, it was August, and this was the Cornish coast; there was, no doubt, a convention of informality that one must recognise, and, contrary to his expectations, he *did* like the place.

"Enormously," he answered. "I was wondering, when you spoke, what it was about it that attracted me so strongly. Candidly, I came here to amuse my wife. She was born in this part of the world. Now, I'm a Yorkshire man myself, and all this is new to me. When I've been out for scenery, I've looked for open spaces—the dales, for choice, where the country rolls around you for miles on every side.

Here it's just the opposite. These little valleys, shut in by the hills and ending in tiny coves like this, after the dales it's like being indoors. Mind you, I like it, as I said. Big country has a way of making you feel small—that ant-like feeling, eh? Now, I don't care for being made feel small, and never did."

He laughed, and when Rendle Thomas laughed, his fleshy, rather brutal face became attractive. There was, as interviewing journalists had often written, a fresh and boyish quality in his laughter. One sensed a frank, straightforward nature.

The man who leant against the grey stone wall beside him was looking out to sea. He smoked a pipe, and wore a sweater and old flannel trousers and canvas shoes no longer white. He spoke without turning, and his words were punctuated by vehement suckings at his pipe.

"I'm glad you like it. I'm a resident myself. Never get tired of it, and never

could. You're pretty comfortable at 'The Ship'?" He jerked his head towards the one hotel that Lissa boasted. "They do one pretty well, considering their resources. And in your case, of course——"

Thomas, surprised, had turned; he met the gaze of eyes that twinkled in a narrow face that, even in the moonlight, one could see was deeply tanned.

"Look here," the stranger said apologetically, "I only hope that you weren't travelling incognito. Because, if so—Lissa's a shocking place for gossip, I'm afraid. Davies, the landlord of 'The Ship,' accosted me in the street to-day and told me he was entertaining millionaires. What? No, I didn't say you were—myself, you know. But you're a pretty famous man, even down here, since that Amalgamated Shipping deal. We don't expect to harbour High Finance in Lissa, and I'm afraid you've been discussed in every house and cottage in a five-mile radius. There's no great harm in that, I take it? How do our people strike you, anyhow? It's only fair that you should have a chance of answering their fire."

Thomas laughed again. "Really," he said, "I haven't had much opportunity as yet of studying them. They do seem, since you ask me, rather primitive. Some of the fishermen, and even more some of the chaps you meet inland a bit, look to have been born a couple of hundred years too late. When we were getting near here in the car, I told my wife that these must be the people who buy shares in salted gold mines. I'd often wondered who it was one sold 'em to. Even the horses are behind the times. Do you know, they're actually scared of cars? I fancied they were broken to them everywhere by now. We came on one old Johnny—the corners in these lanes of yours make it difficult to keep up your speed, and we were pretty well on top of him—whose gee-gee did a regular Wild West stunt. Heaven knows whether he kept his seat—he seemed too busy cursing us to worry about it, and I certainly wasn't worrying. I hate to stop on a long trip."

The stranger laughed with him. "Well, I suppose we must seem a bit primitive," he said. "You'd smile if I confided to you that the Lissa men are held, in these parts, to be just a little—smart, shall we put it?—in affairs of business. Still, such their reputation. Don't let it cause you any sleepless nights. Davies, your host, is

a foreigner, from Plymouth. Well, I must be off. Tell me at any time—Santer's my name, by the way—if you're in need of such help as a resident can give a visitor. You will?"

He walked away, and Thomas watched the glint of the white sweater in the moonlight till its owner reached the shadow of an overhanging rock.

"A decent sort of chap," he thought; and then, using a favourite phrase of his: "He might be useful."

Rendle Thomas turned back to the wall and resumed his contemplation of the sea below. Following the same train of thought, he murmured to himself: "There's that house, now, that the wife's so keen on——"

\* \* \* \* \*

During the next two weeks he saw a lot of Santer. It was from Santer that he learnt the safest bathing-places for high tide and for low, for calm or boisterous weather; it was Santer who informed him of the motor-boat that waited to be hired, dirt cheap for no especial reason, in Polperro. Santer had even offered to disclose his knowledge of the fishing grounds, but Thomas, after one or two attempts, had found that fishing bored him. "Something for nothing," he remarked, after much fruitless casting from a lively boat, "is my aim in life. This is nothing for much too much."

It was not till the end of that fortnight, when his projected stay at Lissa was half-way to completion, that Thomas mentioned the house. That was his way with those whom he found useful. He never rushed his fences, and he seldom bungled them. But Santer, for once, had failed him. A house—in Lissa? Really, he said, scratching his short hair in perplexity, there *wasn't* one—one that a chap like Thomas would call a house. Cottages—yes, though they were difficult to get hold of. One could build, of course. Expensive, that. One had to blast the foundations out of the solid rock in the majority of cases. Still, if he only wanted it for summer use. . . . Couldn't he have a bungalow run up, somewhere above the town, on the High Lissa road, for instance?

Thomas had cut him short. "You don't quite get me. Personally, I'm not mad keen on the idea by any means. My wife's the leading spirit in this enterprise. She wants a house that's part of the place, d'ye see? Something about three hundred years of age, and utterly insanitary, as I vainly tell her. Still, there you are. When you've

a wife of your own, my lad, you'll understand. I've even thought of farmhouses. It's quite an industry in these days, I believe, turning them into Tudor mansions. What about farms round here?"

Santer was dubious. He didn't know—in fact, he hardly thought. . . . "Look here," he said at last, "you must have wondered why it was I never asked you to my place. Well, the fact is—it's not the sort of thing one cares to make a song about—we have to let it every summer. Imperative. It's either that or sell it—you understand—and it has been ours long enough to make the idea of losing it insufferable. Really, I'm sorry to have to mention the place, because it is, I know, exactly what you and your wife are looking for. But if I didn't, somebody else would. . . . It isn't for sale, and never will be, I hope; but, of course, you could always rent it for the summer any year until you *do* get what you want. Don't think I'm trying to grind an axe. We let it easily enough at all times. It's empty now—for a week. One crowd just out and another encamped, as you might say, on the doorstep. . . . Afraid I hate 'em, though that's ridiculous in the circumstances." He paused, and then added, as though the idea had suddenly struck him: "Why don't you come and see the place this afternoon—and Mrs. Thomas, too? It's just two miles from here, inland. I'll drive you in a jingle if you don't mind walking up a hill or two."

"Now, that's a notion," Thomas said. "Of course we'll come, and very glad to. But don't you worry about your—what d'you call it?—jingle. Come round and meet us after lunch at the hotel, and we'll have out the car. It's time my chauffeur did a job of work. Shall we say half-past two?"

They parted amicably on that arrangement.

The house, as Santer said, was all that Mrs. Thomas asked and Rendle Thomas sought. A perfect piece of sixteenth-century work, half-timbered, lattice-windowed. One came on it in grounds whose loveliness could not eclipse the beauty of the building, but only added to it, like the setting of a precious stone; and the interior was everything that, seeing the house itself, one scarcely dared to hope.

"Of course," said Santer, leading them up a staircase to a gallery whose carved balustrades had once been timbers of a Spanish galleon, "some of the furniture's

fake. Not much, but some. That settle you admired so much, Mrs. Thomas, was made ten years ago. Oh, from old wood, of course. We had it done, you know. My father and I—he spends the summer in Town these days—decided some years ago to weed out all the anachronisms and replace them with pieces that really fitted in. Sometimes we picked up genuine stuff and sometimes we couldn't. Faking's immoral, of course, but the result is sufficient justification, don't you think? Oh, that paneling's all right. Part of the house. As a matter of fact, there's a secret passage just along here. I'll show you—"

It was six o'clock before they returned to the bored and hungry chauffeur, but all the way back to Lissa Santer kept up his flow of information and description, answering Mrs. Thomas's questions with the animation of a man who rides his hobby. He was still talking when he followed Thomas, at the latter's invitation, into the little smoking-room of "The Ship."

They were alone in there, and Santer, drinking the whisky that Thomas had ordered, grew silent and seemed strangely ill at ease. Thomas was jovial, bountiful. "Drink it up, man," he said, "and have another. Jove, you *ought* to have a thirst, talking like that! Remarkably decent of you, I must say. My wife was charmed—absolutely. Said she'd never seen anything she liked so much. You must be proud of it, eh? Yes, it was remarkably decent of you, Santer. Wish there was something we could do to square the account. When you're in Town, perhaps—"

Santer cleared his throat. He started to speak, checked himself, and stammered something the other could not catch. Then he plunged.

"There is," he said, "one thing you could do if you chose to—an enormously important thing from my point of view. I've wanted to ask you before, but finked it. Really, it seemed a shame to take advantage—I mean, you've been so decent—an older man than myself, and a successful man, who can choose his friends as he likes."

Thomas was pleased. He was fonder of being informed that he was "decent" than people imagined, and it happened so seldom.

He waved a large hand. "Oh, as to that—but, of course, if there's anything I can do. . . . Tell me the trouble."

Santer had waited till the girl brought

in the double Scotchies. She said "Good evening, Mr. Santer," and he answered with an absent-minded smile. He used the soda sparingly and took the drink at a gulp.

"It's like this," he said. "There's something I want to know. I'm pretty certain you can tell me. My father—all this in confidence, of course—is a gambler. I don't mean that he plunges madly on the Turf, or haunts the tables in the Principality, but merely that he's got it in his blood. If White's were still the fashion in Town, he'd be there now, staking his estate on the turn of the die. I love him for it, but—well it makes things difficult. You know the Black Reef mine—in Mexico? He's had a flutter in that—and the deuce of a flutter, too. He holds a nominal eighteen thousand pounds of shares. They're worth about six thousand at the moment, and near enough that's what they cost him. In a few days they're publishing a report—survey or something—and I've heard a rumour from a friend in Town that the news will send the shares to nothing at all. You may, just possibly, be in a position to find out what this survey business means before they make it public. You see, for us it means—pretty well everything. Six thousand probably seems a potty sum to you, but if we dropped that much, we'd smash for good. That house—the land—everything else—that's what six thousand means to us. We'd have to sell out, lock, stock, and barrel. And if one only knew which way the cat would jump—"

Thomas put down his glass. "Black Reef?" he said. "Black Reef, eh? H'm! Well—" He laughed his boisterous, youthful laugh that seemed to alter all his face, except, perhaps, his eyes. "I suppose you think I can just turn up an index card in my stupendous memory and tell you all? Well, I won't put up a bluff of that sort. I may be apt to come 'The Man of Mystery' and 'The Financial Wizard' on the general public, but I spare my friends. No; I could tell you something as it is, but not enough. I never open my mouth till I've got my facts *complete*—a habit of mine. To-morrow morning, now, somewhere elevenish, when we can have a drink on it? Right, then, I'll find out all you want to know."

He spent some time that evening in the hotel office, using the telephone.

Next morning, when he faced Santer in the smoking-room, Thomas's face was grave. His voice was heavy, emotionless. "I'm

sorry," he said, "to tell you my news is bad. You're going to lose money on your shares whether you hold or sell. If you do hold, you'll lose whatever they cost you. I'm sorry, but that's the case. If you sell out at once—to-day—you ought to do better. Get off with a loss of fifteen hundred, say, at most—if you're in time. How long—"

Santer frowned. His thin, brown face showed only the marks of thought. "A couple of hours," he said after a moment. "Yes, I can fix it in that, over the 'phone. Have to get on to my father first, d'you see? Well, thanks must come later; better 'phone from here, I think."

He almost ran from the room, and Thomas, hearing him hammer on the door to the hotel office and call for Davies, smiled. Then he went up to his room and told his wife to pack.

At half-past five that afternoon they were in the car, and while the chauffeur and old Joe, the handy man of "The Ship," brought out the last of the luggage, Davies stood by the side of the big Sunbeam and chatted with his suddenly departing guests.

It had been a blow to Davies, this apparently inexplicable exodus, and to Mrs. Thomas, too. But she had learnt to know when argument was waste of breath, and she remembered comfortably that Rendle had assured her: "It's not the last time that you'll see this place, old girl. Far from it. Just wait a bit."

Davies stopped short and clapped a hand to his head. "There, now," he said, "if I didn't nearly forget it!" He trotted ponderously into the house, returned with a letter. "From Mr. Santer, sir," he explained, "said as I must make sure you got it before you left. Near as a toucher I forgot it, too."

Thomas, his heavy face entirely devoid of expression, was reading the letter. "... and Davies tells me you're bolting this afternoon. I'm not surprised. It's a funny thing about you financial wolves—you hate to stay within earshot of your victims' lamentable cries. Wonder it worries you, myself. Well, there's no need for you to cut your cable this time. I'm not ruined, after all. Indeed, I'm not a lot of things you've been imagining me to be.

"I felt quite certain you would fall for it. When you started talking about a house, I knew that it only needed a little thought, and you were delivered into my hands. After you'd seen Sir Henry St. Pierre's



place—he's away at the moment, and I know his housekeeper even better than I know him—the rest was easy. A chance to grab the object of your desire by means of a really dirty trick was something you were hardly likely to miss.

"I never owned

to cause a slump. Quite the reverse, I think.

"You'll find it has cost you quite a lot, chucking Black Reefs on the market till the bottom dropped out of 'em. If in a week



"You're going to lose money on your shares whether you hold or sell. . . . I'm sorry, but that's the case. If you sell out at once—to-day—you ought to do better. Get off with a loss of fifteen hundred, say, at most—if you're in time. How long—"

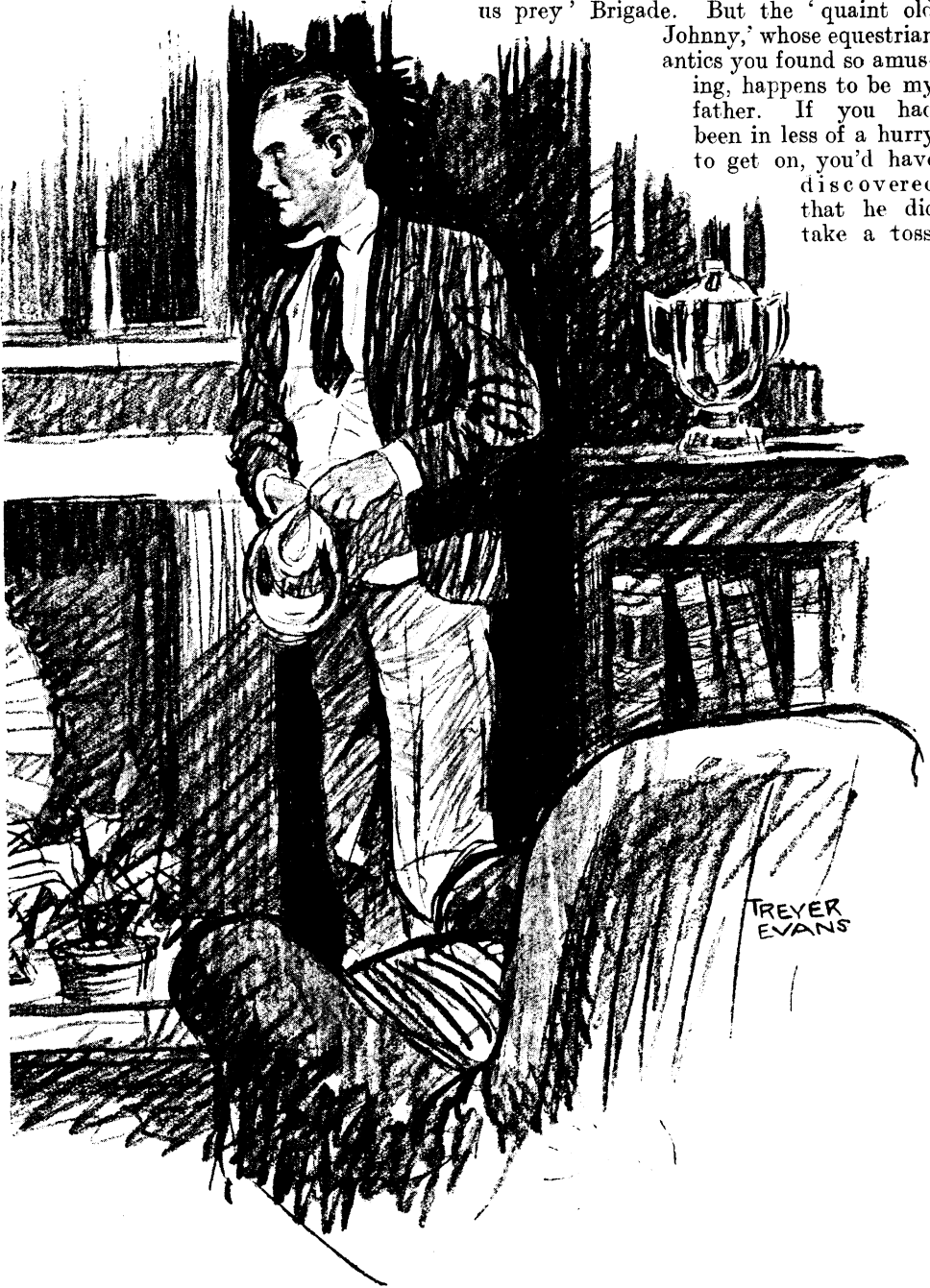
any Black Reef shares, my 'Man of Mystery,' but I knew you held a nominal thirty thousand that had cost you nothing. Also I knew, from a friend of mine who's a mining engineer in those parts, that the imminent report of the annual survey is hardly likely

or so you add to what you have lost by not holding what I shall have made by buying your shares for next to nothing, you'll be surprised at the total.

"You see, I felt so confident you'd do exactly what you've done. Nothing like

making a beggar of your friend when you've an eye on his estate!

into a business letter—I'm not, as a general rule, to be found in the ranks of the 'Let us prey' Brigade. But the 'quaint old Johnny,' whose equestrian antics you found so amusing, happens to be my father. If you had been in less of a hurry to get on, you'd have discovered that he did take a toss.



"Santer frowned. . . . 'A couple of hours,' he said after a moment. 'Yes, I can fix it in that, over the 'phone. Have to get on to my father first, d'you see?'"

"And, by the way—forgive my being so primitive as to intrude a personal matter He broke his right arm in two places—rather a rotten business at his age. It took

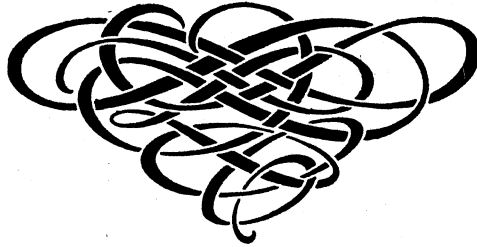
him some considerable time to get home. However, you can always pride yourself that you paid the doctor's bill. My father is getting on quite well, all things considered, and he wishes me to say that he forgives you. He also says—I fear he's a venial old man—that you can break his other arm and both his legs at the same rate per fracture."

"Maybe you'd like to send an answer, sir?" said Davies. He had an idea his millionaire might come again, and he was determined, if affability and a desire to please could move him, that he should keep pleasant memories of "The Ship" at Lissa.

"You saw a lot of Mr. Santer, didn't you?" he ran on. "He's quite a local character here, young Harry Santer. Old Santer—he's the shipwright here—made money in the War and sent his son to Oxford College. Reckon he knew what he was doing, too. He's got brains, young Mr. Santer has. A proper sharp one, he is. For all his pleasant ways and his London manner of speech, there isn't a sharper man in Lissa town than Harry Santer."

The bitterness of the reply that cut him short stung Davies like an unexpected blow in the face.

"You surprise me," said Rendle Thomas.



## COTTON GRASS.

(PIXIE WOOF).

**B**Y wet and swampy ways,  
Where snipe and lapwing rule,  
Where pink bell heather strays  
About a peaty pool,  
Where dry-shod folk forbear to pass  
It flaunts its plumes—the cotton grass.

On slender stem-tips placed,  
The milk-white pennons toss;  
The burgees of the waste  
Bog margins they emboss.  
Gaze and admire, but, if you pluck,  
You'll spoil the "little people's" luck.

At full of moon one night  
The pixies muster round,  
They reap their harvest white,  
Their spinning wheels whirr round,  
And ere the moon sinks in the west,  
Each pixie wears a new silk vest.

JESSIE POPE.



#### COLLABORATORS.

"WHAT'S the idea, giving me a penny and keeping tuppence?"

"Well, I made 'im, didn't I?"

"But I lent yer the clothes fer 'im—'e wouldn't er bin no good naked!"

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### OLD SILVER.

*By T. Hodgkinson.*

IN the ordinary way we never entertain on a lavish scale, but our Hermione's wedding seemed an occasion for departing from our rule.

After all, it was not likely to occur again, seeing that she had never shown any longing for a film career, and the more guests we could crowd in, the more presents were likely to accrue.

As far as I could gather, the mode of the moment is to have breakfast at a night club, and that was our first idea. Our second was to descend in force upon some inoffensive hotel. But the drawback to both of these was that they would not enable us to display our silver in the way I should like, and I am very proud of our silver.

Having inherited three or four pieces of genuine old stuff, I have gradually added others, and, in addition, seen to it that, even when not old, our tableware is a thing to be proud of.

Set out at the wedding breakfast, it would, I considered, lend dignity to the scene and make the bridegroom's supporters feel that he was marrying into a family worth entering.

Having, therefore, decided to hold the function at home, it seemed to me the obvious course to make all the preparations at home, too. But Hermione and her mother would not hear of this.

"Don't be mean," they implored me. "Put the whole thing into the hands of a good caterer." But even when I yielded I had my doubts of the wisdom of this. Now I know that my first instinct was right.

Not that there was anything wrong with the catering. The Royal Hotel did us top-hole, and on the table our silver lent the anticipated dignity to the scene.

To draw the company's attention to its many beauties was, of course, forbidden by the dictates of good form, and I was accordingly delighted to find the bridegroom's Uncle Augustus so appreciative of them.

Uncle Augustus was a dignified gentleman

with a voice that compelled attention for his most trivial remark, and by the time he had referred to my silver half a dozen times everyone was listening.

"I picked it up from time to time," I told him airily in answer to his inquiry. "A piece here and a piece there as opportunity occurred."

"Delightful!" he boomed for the tenth time, gazing at the salt cellar (my best piece) that happened to be near him. "May I examine it?" And he picked it up to do so.

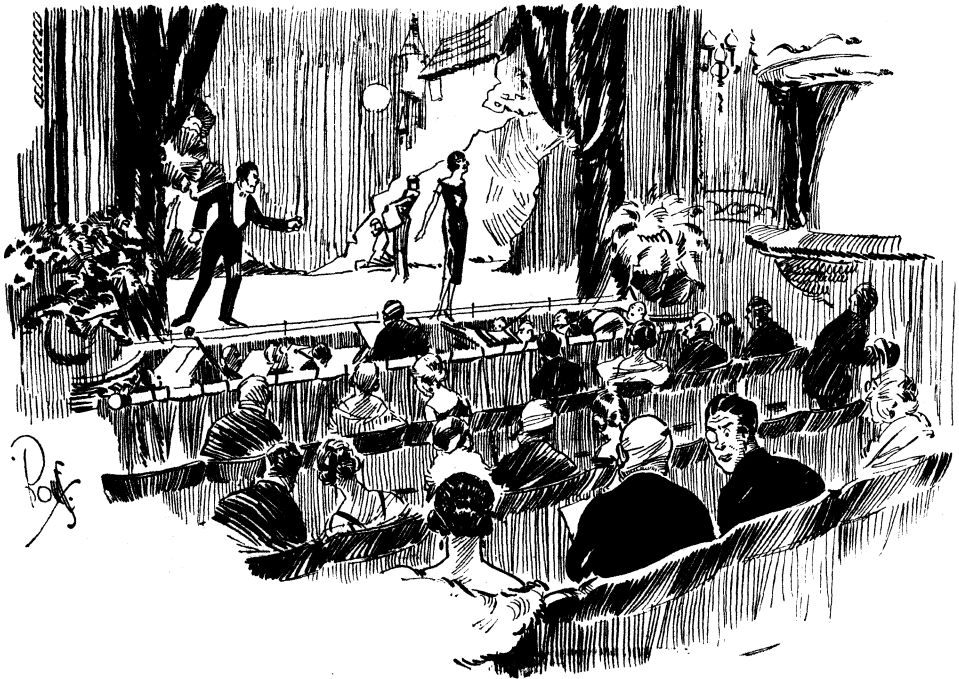
People are absurdly imitative. Following uncle's lead, everyone picked up the piece of silver nearest to him or her and examined it carefully, regardless of whether it was ancient or modern, beautiful or merely useful.

### A MISGUIDED CHOICE.

A well-known doctor declares that "music has a definite psychological effect on the worker, bracing him up and increasing the quality and quantity of production."

Alas! I made a grave mistake  
In that past season when  
I gallantly resolved to make  
A living with my pen,  
Exploiting all my working time  
A certain aptitude for rhyme.

The fitting word's so hardly gained  
(If ever gained at all)  
That aye my output has remained  
Preposterously small;  
My Muse, so slow her help to bring,  
Is not at all a bright young thing.



SHAKESPEARE IN MODERN DRESS.

**PUZZLED PLAYGOER** (at a performance of "Macbeth" in modern dress): I say, who's the guy on the left—is that Macbeth or the stage-manager?

I even took up the nearest spoon myself, so catching was the habit, and one glance at it was sufficient to make me conscious of a vague air of suspicion pervading the rest of the company. Uncle Augustus had ruined my reputation. For half the silver, which I had airily told him had been picked up piece by piece as opportunity occurred, was marked Royal Hotel in large letters.

No wonder it is being whispered that Hermione's husband has made a *mésalliance*.



**ACCORDING** to Professor J. Harlen Bretz, the Niagara Falls are thirty-eight thousand years old—and to think that they are still running!

But though it kept me far from rich,  
My error was not plain,  
Until some minstrel found a pitch  
Beneath my study's pane,  
And hymned (cum cornet) every day  
The chord he'd happened to mislay.

But now so well he braces me  
A flood of words is mine,  
And I am brought at last to see  
That verse is not my line;  
My genius more freely flows  
Vituperatively in prose.

*Thota.*



**WIRELESS ENTHUSIAST:** What do you consider the most efficient loud speaker?

**FRIEND:** The baby next door

## GARAGES.

*By G. Geary.*

You may be an experienced chauffeur, you may have won all the prizes in the motor world that are to be won, but I defy you to drive any car into our garage (an ex-mews) without having to pay the toll in some shape or form.

The rooms above the garages are let to various grooms, their wives and families, who naturally want some drying ground for their almost daily washing, also somewhere to have their morning or evening gossip with their neighbour, and a place for their hens, rabbits, etc., besides a cricket pitch or football ground for their young sons. The girls, -too, want a place to play dolls in, or whatever game takes their fancy for the moment. And I do not begrudge any of the tenants these privileges; I think it is quite right they should have them. I am only pointing out what experienced driving you require to make your way with your car in or out of your own particular garage without causing any damage to the human tenants of such establishments. And there are many such all over the country. I always think it is somewhat pathetic how in most cases the coachman still lives above the compartment which used to contain his pride and joy, and into which outsiders were allowed to enter only under very special conditions.

Now he has but the rooms above and the stalls below, and there his dominion ends. Queer vehicles of all shapes and forms now occupy the sacred coach-house, and many a snort of disdain must he bestow on these horseless carriages.

But to return to the mere motor. Even if you have successfully manœuvred your car

through the football or cricket match without an accident, without warning you find yourself gasping for breath and light, having carried away a clothes prop in your career, and incidentally wrapped yourself in some intricate lingerie. With difficulty you disentangle your



AT THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.

SMALL BOY: Mummie, when the Lord Mayor passes, ought I to salute or stand beheaded?

head, and, somewhat harassed by your momentary blindness, you make a turn for your particular garage. Horrors! Madly you jam on every brake you can remember to use, and bring the car to an abrupt standstill with force enough incidentally to give your brakes a good test of their strength. For there, right in the centre of the ex-coach house, stands a

pram, with a baby jumping with joy at the sight of the "car," and held in only by a precarious strap! Perspiring profusely from your narrow escape of manslaughter, you look round anxiously for some responsible person to remove to safety the innocent obstruction. From somewhere invisible you hear: "Mrs. Jones, the gentleman is waiting to put 'is car in the garage, and I don't think 'e 'as quite enough room with the baby there." And presently, with no haste in her movements, Mrs. Jones appears, wiping her arms with her apron, and a smile on her face. "'Ope you 'aven't been waiting long, sir. It's washing day, you see, and with this showery weather the garage is a grand place for baby. Plenty of fresh air, and she's safe from the rain!"

A PARROT got loose and flew out of the window. Great was the owner's distress. Rushing wildly to the front of the house, she saw Polly sitting contentedly on the roof.

Then she noticed a man coming down the street, carrying a ladder.

"Please, my good man, will you get up on to the roof and catch my bird for me?" she implored.

Quite willing to oblige, the man placed his ladder against the wall and slowly made his way up it. At last he reached the roof and crept towards Polly. That intelligent creature drew herself up.

"What the dickens are you messing about on this roof for?" she shouted at him.

The man came to a sudden stop, raised his



TACT.

SENIOR PARTNER: Have you written Grabb and Co. that tactful little note about their overcharge?

VERY JUNIOR PARTNER: Doin' it now. How many "d's" are there in "swindlers"?

I love my fellow-creatures, and I am very fond of children, but somehow, when driving in or out of my garage, I often wish the building crisis would come to a speedy end, and that everyone and everything need not be huddled together in quite such close quarters.



COUNTY COURT JUDGE (to a very talkative lady witness): Stop, my good woman! You are wasting the time of the court. More than half of what you have said is totally irrelevant.

LADY WITNESS: Well, I do declare! That's a nice thing, and here 'ave I bin a regular church-goer for years and years!

hat, and replied, "Beg pardon, ma'am! Thought you was a bird!" and climbed down again.



LITTLE Dora had just received a bright new sixpence, and was starting out to invest it in chocolates, when the vicar of the parish, who chanced to be calling at the time, asked:

"Why don't you give your money to the missionaries, Dora?"

"I thought about that," replied the child. "But I think I will buy the chocolates and let the shopman give the money to the missionaries."

## THE CLIENT.

*By Holloway Horn.*

MR. MALCOLM K. BURRITT was an exceedingly smart young man even for a solicitor. He knew all there was to know, and more besides, but to a certain extent his smartness was wasted, for solicitors—like doctors—may not advertise. There are, however, many ways of impressing one's importance and ability on a client, or a possible client, without resorting to the cruder forms of publicity, without, indeed, doing anything which is—technically—in contravention of the regulations of the Law Society.

Mr. Burritt had recently performed the operation of what is known as "putting up a plate" in Mossford. This means that he had not bought a practice, or a share in one, but just started out on his own. Mossford already boasted of six solicitors—"boasted" is, perhaps, hardly the word—and Mr. Burritt's action had earned for him a certain amount of unpopularity among his legal brethren.

Clients did not exactly queue up on his doorstep, but he was not a young man easily deterred. He was calmly certain that sooner or later they *would* come, for advice is always valued when it is charged for, and rarely when it is given away. Mr. Burritt, needless to say, did not propose to give it away.

One afternoon towards the end of the first week his clerk announced a caller. Mr. Burritt straightened his tie.

"Show him into the outer office," he said.

"Not the waiting-room, sir?" the clerk asked in surprise.

"The outer office," said Burritt firmly.

This office was separated from Mr. Burritt's room by a wooden partition so thin that it was possible for a person therein to hear what Mr. Burritt said if he spoke in a sufficiently loud voice. He waited until the visitor was ushered

in. Then, leaning back in his chair, he said in a very clear, distinct voice:

"Yes. Malcolm K. Burritt speaking. Oh, it's you, Sir John! To-morrow at five? Do you mind waiting a moment while I turn up my appointment book?"

A silence.

"I'm sorry, but I cannot possibly manage it," the smart young man went on. "I have



A TRADITIONAL PRECAUTION.

BANK CLERK: Do I understand that you wish to withdraw the whole amount?"

RUSTIC: Aye, but only for a minuit—I allus turns it over at the noo moon!

appointments up to five-thirty. I could see you at six. Then I will expect you at six o'clock. Good-bye, Sir John."

He was rather pleased with the effort and decided to amplify the idea.

"Give me Regent nine thousand and nine," he continued, in the same distinct voice to the still-unouched telephone. "Is Lord Wyven at home? Your lordship speaking? I



thought I recognised your voice. Malcolm K. Burritt speaking here. I have gone into the figures you submitted to me, and I'm afraid I cannot advise your lordship to go any further in the matter. Cape Tangos—the six per cents. I mentioned to you yesterday evening—form a much safer investment. Not at all. I am always happy to be of service to your lordship. To-morrow, I'm afraid, is quite impossible. I have appointments up to six o'clock. I could see your lordship *this* afternoon at five-thirty. I didn't catch that? You'll motor down? Very good. I'll expect you, then, at five-thirty."

Mr. Burritt grinned broadly as he rang the bell. In response, the visitor was ushered in.

The solicitor, with a gracious gesture, indicated a chair, but the visitor, who seemed ill at ease, remained standing. He was a

his face lost its impassivity; the solemnity which had saturated him disappeared. He made a spluttering noise, and in an awful moment it dawned on the solicitor that the young man was overcome with a mirth which he was vainly attempting to stifle.

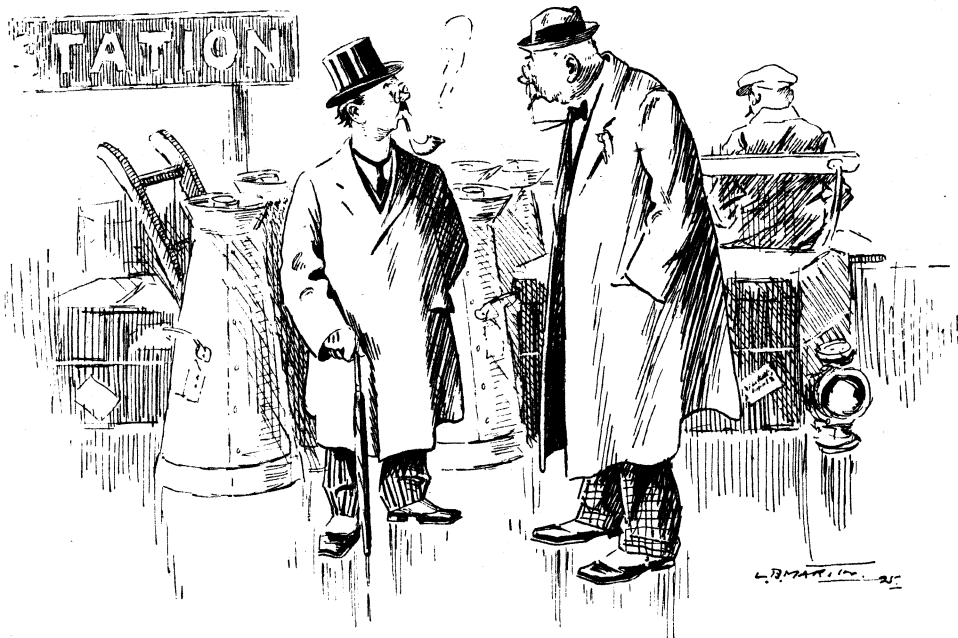
"Excuse me," the young man said, and—not to put too fine a point upon it—guffawed.

Mr. Burritt waited. He knew that something was wrong somewhere, but he had no idea what it was.

It dawned on him that it might be the reaction from some terrible strain, that, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, he might even be in the presence of tragedy.

"You wish to consult me?" he asked gently.

"No, sir. I—I came to connect the telephone."



LEARNING FROM NATURE.

"The slowness of this railway doesn't seem to worry your nerves very much, old man."

"It used to, my boy, but I've been a different man since I've kept those two tortoises. There's nothing like getting back to Nature."

quietly-dressed young man, and Mr. Burritt began to wonder if he were quite worth the elaborate trouble he had taken.

But, after all, he was the first to call, and one never knew to what even the most unprepossessing client might lead.

"What can I do for you?" he asked genially.

"Well, sir, it's difficult—a difficult matter. After what you were just saying——"

"I always ask my clients to be quite frank with me. I find I can assist them far more if they are," Mr. Burritt said quietly.

Suddenly, in a most disconcerting manner, something in the young man seemed to snap;

#### OVERHEARD AT A PICTURE GALLERY.

OLD LADY (to husband): What's Number Twenty-five, Jarge?

JARGE (referring to catalogue): Portrait of the artist by himself.

OLD LADY: Well, surely there's no need to tell a body—there's no one else in the picture.



"A LARGE number of our Labour Members," remarks a daily paper "began life at a very early age." Most of us seem to have done that.



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**SAFETY FIRST.**

*By R. W. Bond.*

ERNEST PODWING was blessed to a marked degree with the gifts of eloquence, persuasiveness, imagination, energy, determination, and self-confidence. When, therefore, the time came for Podwing to lay aside his school cap and embark upon the world in a wage-earning capacity, it was, of course, recognised on all sides that there was but one calling which would allow the young man to make full use of his many remarkable qualities. Accordingly Ernest Podwing became an insurance agent.

From the first day on which Podwing fingered a proposal form his success was assured. He was simply irresistible. Everything he touched turned to completed and signed proposal forms. In remarkably short space of time he became famous. Hard-bitten, keen-eyed business men formed the habit of slinking up quiet side-streets at his approach, and his latest achievements formed the main topic of conversation among his colleagues. So capable and efficient, indeed, was Ernest Podwing that at the end of his first year in business he was able truthfully to affirm that on no occasion had he tackled a client without extracting business from him.

It was at this time, when riding buoyantly on the flood-tide of success, that Ernest Podwing made the acquaintance of Mr. Simpson at a bazaar held in a local church hall. Podwing had engineered the introduction because he had heard that Mr. Simpson had that day purchased an expensive car, which, of course, it was quite probable he had not had time to insure.

When the person who officiated at the introduction ceremony had sheered off, therefore, Podwing started a pleasant conversation on golf, and then steered it skilfully into a discussion on breeding canaries, from which, for a man

of his conversational powers, it was, of course, a simple matter to work towards the question of motor-cars and their insurance.

The moment, however, that Mr. Simpson became aware of the trend of the conversation he shed his affability with startling suddenness and scowled.

"Look here, young man," said he aggressively, "you're the ninth insurance man who has approached me during the day, and I'm

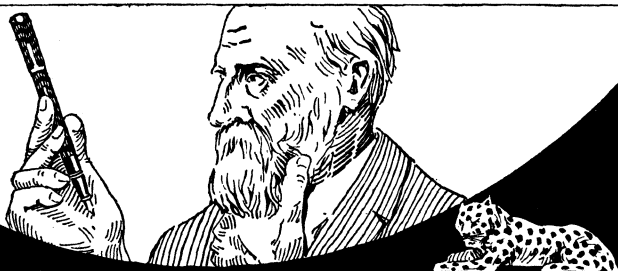


ON THE SMALL SIDE.

SECOND ARRIVAL: Excuse me, are you the Mass Meeting which is to take place here?

heartily sick of being pestered. Let me tell you right away that you're wasting your time. I've no intention of insuring. My considered view is that the possibility of accident is not nearly great enough to warrant the payment of one-tenth of the rates you insurance people charge. I'm a careful man, and I'll take good care I have no accidents. So I'm not insuring, my boy, and that's flat!"

"Mr. Simpson," replied Podwing imper- turbably, "I admire your frankness. But listen to me—"



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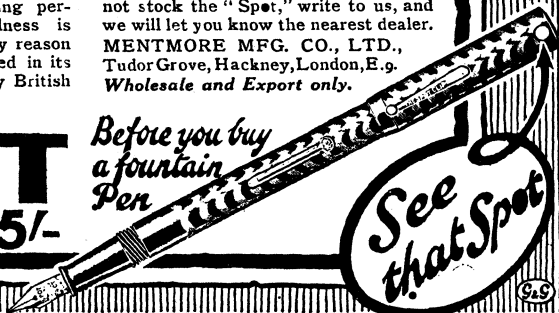
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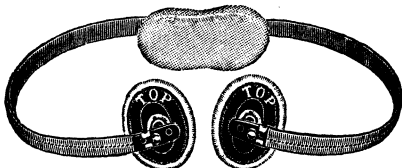
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(One minute from Oxford Circus.)

During the ensuing two hours Ernest Podwing spoke as he had never spoken before. Brilliantly, confidently, and convincingly, he rendered graphic and vivid word-pictures of ninety-three different motor accidents which might, and did, occur on the road through no fault of any party concerned. He spoke as one inspired, and his every word rang true.

At first Mr. Simpson was openly rude, then sneeringly sceptical, and finally obstinately silent. But as time passed and Podwing continued in masterly style to describe accident after accident, Mr. Simpson became visibly ill at ease. He wriggled restlessly about on his chair, beads of perspiration appeared upon his brow, and his cheeks paled gradually. And still Ernest Podwing spoke on brilliantly, eloquently, and convincingly. At length, unable to stand any more, Mr. Simpson burst into tears. Noting this with inward satisfaction, Podwing stopped speaking and discreetly turned away his head.

When he had to some extent recovered his composure, Mr. Simpson rose shakily to his feet.

"My boy," he said, with considerable emotion, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have done me a very great service. I am grateful to you." He shook Podwing's hand warmly. "You will excuse me now if I make my departure." So saying, he turned away in the direction of the door.

Overcoming his surprise, Podwing streaked after the disappearing form of Mr. Simpson and tapped his shoulder.

"Excuse me, Mr. Simpson," said Podwing, producing a proposal form from his pocket and smiling disarmingly, "but haven't you time to settle this little matter of your insurance before you go? Won't take two minutes."

Mr. Simpson shuddered. "Insurance?" he asked frowningly. "No fear. Not for me."

Podwing's jaw dropped. For perhaps the first time in his life he found his tongue refusing to function. Then, with a tremendous effort, he recovered.

"Not—going—to—insure?" he faltered dazedly. "Did you say not—not insure?"

"You've got it!" replied Mr. Simpson briskly. "As a matter of fact, I'm just going along to sell that dashed car of mine. I've given up the idea of motoring altogether."

SHE was what is called a "good shopper." That meant that she drove salesmen to distraction with her demands. She was never

satisfied until she had the whole stock of the shop turned upside down for her convenience.

Last week she was buying a fur piece. After nearly an hour's hesitation she at length hit on one that she hated a little less than the others.

"Are you sure this fur won't shrink?" she inquired. "If it rains and one gets caught without an umbrella, it might, you know."

"Madam," replied the long-suffering salesman, with a weary sigh, "the fur didn't shrink on the last party that wore it, and he was never known to carry an umbrella."



A WARNING.

"HULLO! Where did you get this?"

"Oh, I admired it in Dauber's studio, and he gave it to me."

"That shows you how careful one must be with those artist fellows."

MOTHER: I'm so glad you've had Prunella to tea—she's a delightful little person.

SMALL DAUGHTER (ruefully showing large empty sweet box): Yes, mummie, Turkish-delight-full.



BROWN (in between the dances): There's a lady over there who has been watching you for ever so long; she'll be asking for an introduction soon.

JONES: She won't—she's my wife!

# ASPIRIN—a word of WARNING

Do not acquire the habit of taking Aspirin to excess. Remember that this valuable drug is not a cure-all, or even a tonic. Its greatest use is in relieving headache, lowering the temperature, inducing sleep, &c. Do not be misled, by cheap prices, to buy Aspirin Tablets, which may be adulterated, under weight, or perhaps compressed in such a manner as to be completely ineffective. Buy by name, and be safe. Howards' Aspirin Tablets are quite pure, easily digested, instantly broken up in water, and immediate in their action. Tell your Chemist you want

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